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CURRENT COMMENT.

MR. HARDING has done a splendid thing in bespeaking the simplest and least expensive ceremonies at his inauguration. Moreover, he has done this excellent thing in a conspicuously nice way, a becoming way, and this pleases us even more. His letters to Mr. Knox and Mr. McLean are sincere, dignified, modest and free from self-consciousness, and it does one good to read them. Mr. Harding will not always, unfortunately, be able to distinguish himself as he has done in this matter. When he once "turns to the work which will be waiting," when he confronts the dishonourable exactions of that work, the poor man will no doubt wish many times a day that he could show himself thus honest and sincere and straightforward. All the more then will it be a pleasure to remember how he behaved when he was able to behave as he chose.

WE have no wish to carry to tiresome lengths our discussion of direct action as an effective method of forcing disarmament. Yet there are one or two points suggested by the letter of the Women's Peace Society, in our issue of 19 January, which will bear brief consideration. First, if "politicians will quickly bend the knee" when women have made up their minds rightly on the question of disarmament, will they not do so as quickly when taxpayers and rent-payers, irrespective of sex, make up their minds rightly and follow their decision with the most effective kind of action: namely, the withholding of supplies? After all, when women have made up their minds, they must still take some action if they are to influence the politicians. This paper has shown the futility of political action in this case; direct action, therefore, would appear to be the alternative, if any action at all is to be attempted.

Secondly, it should be remembered that the war precipitated by our tea-drinking, non-tax-paying ancestors was a war between the British Government, backed by a large section of British opinion and the Governments of the Colonies: it was something in the nature of a foreign war. If the British Government had been confronted with a domestic situation akin to the situation in the colonies it must necessarily have behaved very differently. It would have been obliged, if it had taken military action, to deal with the defaulting taxpayers as

it would have dealt with rioters—but matters would never have come to that pass; a fire at home is much more of a menace to safety than one three thousand miles away. Faced at home with a widespread popular determination to control Government policy through a tightening of the purse-strings, British politicians would have taken to cover with astonishing alacrity, just as American politicians will take to cover if they are ever confronted with such an attitude in the American people.

A FEW recent disclosures in regard to methods of operating railways under private ownership give added significance to the near-success of the railway-interests in securing a surreptitious suspension of section 10 of the Clayton Act. On 9 January, representatives of the railway employes declared before the Railway Labour Board that eighty per cent of the country's railway mileage is controlled by twelve New York banks, which are controlled, in turn, by twenty-five men; and that this group of banks has interlocking directorates with twenty leading equipment concerns. The practice of the roads has been to allot to these outside concerns, on a cost-plus basis, contracts for repairs which could have been done for one-third as much money in the company-shops. A day later Mr. Jesse Lauck, representing the National Association of Machinists, published some very interesting figures showing the enormous excess in cost of repairs done by outside companies over those done in the railway shops—an excess which, if the practice were allowed to continue, would amount to \$1,400,000,000 per annum.

THIS paper has been disposed to regard that \$600,000,000 due from the taxpayers to the railway companies under the Esch-Cummins law, as a thundering big bonus to pay on shocking bad service; but these figures have wrought in us a change of heart. Our present mood is one of devout thankfulness to the railway executives for their moderation, not unmixed with admiration of their ingenuity. With such a capacious sink-hole for their earnings, they might easily have run that net deficit of theirs up to three times the amount they are demanding from the Government. The exactions of privilege have always been limited only by what it could get; and certainly the railways have rarely tried to exact anything which has not been speedily allowed them by Congress or the Interstate Commerce Commission. Why, then, have the companies been so modest in this case?

THIS practice of paying Peter in order to rob Paul lends more than a touch of irony to the testimony of railway and equipment-company executives before the House Interstate Commerce Committee. The railway companies, it appears, in order to pay themselves as equipment companies, must have immediate part-payment of their guarantees; they have not enough cash on hand to pay their bills. This is not surprising. The figures into which these bills run, when 110 per cent of labour-costs is added for overhead charges and 15 per cent of the demd total reckoned in for profit, must be such as to make even the Government's cash-on-hand look like a puny sum. It seems to us that promoters of the Plumb Plan can afford to take a holiday. At this rate private management of the railways will do more to popularize their project in a year than they themselves, by the most ardent proselytizing, could do in five.

THE railway-executives differ widely from the employees in their relation of these circumstances to the present unemployment-situation. The employees maintain that the granting of contracts to outside equipment-companies closes many of the company-shops and throws thousands of skilled machinists out of work. The executives, for their part, have impressed the Interstate Commerce Committee with the distress which labour will suffer if the poverty-stricken companies are compelled to discontinue equipment and repairs. Without discussing the merits of these contentions, it is probably safe to assume, first, that the executives would not cry their eyes out if the open-shop policy were established. Naturally, if shutting down the company-shops would help out this policy, reducing forces in the outside equipment-companies would help it still more; it would create just so much larger a labour-surplus. Secondly, if the executives, by patient neglect of equipment and repairs, can force a repeal of section 10 of the Clayton Act, one can assume that they would be fairly cheerful about it. Such a policy is hard on labour and hard on the public, but from the standpoint of the executives, one must say that this killing of two birds with one stone is first-class economy and efficiency.

THE Farmer-Labour party seems to have had some effect in making its two component groups aware of each other's needs. Thousands of unemployed textile workers of the Kensington Mill district in Philadelphia are being directly supplied with produce from local farmers. The distribution is through committees of union men who know the needs of members of their own locals. The Women's Trade Union League has been the distributing centre so far, but later a special commissary department may be established at Kensington, where unemployed workers may obtain produce. We have here a small practical example of how the producer can supply the consumer without the assistance of middlemen. Should this experiment prove successful, the farmers might be encouraged to extend this direct-supply system to larger groups, in which case the middlemen's status might be somewhat changed. The middleman has a place and a function; he saves money and trouble. The thing is to keep him in his place and hold him to his function; and a little co-operative understanding between the producer and the consumer is all that is needed to do that.

AGAIN our Pilate's Government has taken water and washed its hands before the multitude; once more the National Civic Federation and the *New York Times* have cried out in approval; and still there remains the haunting doubt that all is not well with the Russian policy of the Administration. In his long letter to the President of the Civic Federation on the subject of America's relations with Russia, our Acting Secretary of State very evidently seeks to create the impression that the Government has done everything that can be done, short of recognition, to restore normal relations with Russia. Secretary Davis admits that individual Americans who want to deal with individual Russians in the same fashion that they deal with individual Englishmen, are quite unable to do so. According to Mr. Davis's statement, this unnatural condition of affairs is due in part to certain restrictions imposed upon trade by the Soviet Government, and in part to the fact that Russia and America are not upon a footing of diplomatic intimacy. Since the condition last named is due to the unfitness of the Soviet Government for recognition, it would appear that the entire responsibility for the existence of obstacles to natural relations rests directly or indirectly upon that Government.

WE are not at present concerned with the restrictions which the Soviet authorities may have chosen to place upon trade and intercourse; but those hindrances which are due to non-recognition are another matter altogether. The Soviet Government is to all appearances eager for the resumption of diplomatic relations; if such relations

do not now exist, it is because our State Department has made recognition contingent upon Russia's compliance with certain conditions which have to do chiefly, if not entirely, with the domestic affairs of the Soviet Republic. Moscow might perhaps remove the bar to recognition by undertaking a complete overhauling of the country's economic and political system; Washington could certainly remove it by a cessation of all attempts to meddle with affairs that are no business of ours, and never can be. Mr. Wilson, Mr. Colby, Mr. Davis and all the other members of their fellowship must know that by exchanging a few words with Moscow they can remove every trade-obstacle over which the United States can have any control; and they know that trade can not be revived until these obstacles are removed. If the Administration really wants to clear itself of all responsibility for any difficulties which may arise in the future in connexion with America's relations with Russia, let our diplomats undertake at once the formalities of recognition. At any rate let us have an end of ceremonial hand-washing.

ONCE upon a time Olympian Zeus sent down to a city by the Seine fourteen maidenly Ideals which were mated there in secret with fourteen different varieties of doddering Diplomacy; and from these incestuous unions were born fourteen causes of fourteen wars to come. Any one who does not believe all this should read the catalogue of international complications just put forth by M. Scelle, Professor of International Law at Dijon University, and summarized as follows in a recent issue of the *New York Times*:

1. A portion of Asiatic Turkey is pregnant with immediate conflict, even among the Allies. Four or five nations are engaged in this struggle.
2. Baltic competition is more bitter than ever.
3. The Sarre Valley contains the germs of a conflict for the future.
4. The blaze may break out in the Ruhr at any moment.
5. Patchwork reconstruction of Poland, the Danzig corridor and the isolation of East Prussia are so many wasps' nests of trouble.
6. Silesia is a burning question. Teschen puts Poland and Czecho-Slovakia in brutal opposition.
7. Jugo-Slavia can not achieve her unity.
8. Reactionary Hungary is simply awaiting her hour to spring upon her neighbours.
9. Austria can not live alone.
10. Bulgaria is sulky and stealthily is plotting revenge.
11. Greater Greece of the Sèvres Treaty is an absurd and impossible conception.
12. Rumania is threatened by her neighbours both on the Bessarabian and Transylvanian flanks.
13. Anglo-American rivalry.
14. Antagonism of the Japanese and Americans in the Pacific; and over the whole dark picture the shadow of bolshevism throws still darker gloom.

Small wonder that in the Professor's opinion the next war is more likely than the last one ever was.

AUSTRIA has yielded to the inevitable. Her Government has announced that it has no further resources and can not go on; and it will therefore suspend operations on 15 January and hand the administration of the country over to the Allies. Presumably the Reparations Committee will now take charge and carry on the affairs of that unhappy country as they would those of any other slave-stockade—in an enlightened and humanitarian way, no doubt, but somewhat remote from the principles of the Fourteen Points, perhaps. The example is a good one for posterity to consider, however, and in that light it seems rather a pity that Germany did not do likewise. It throws up into full view the war-aims of the Allies, the utter perfidy of the armistice-terms, the shocking atrocity of the peace treaty, the unspeakable character of the Governments concerned. It gives eloquent and unshakable testimony, also, concerning the men who arranged the treacherous conditions of the armistice and of the peace. The next generation will remark that none of them has as yet gone out and hanged himself, and will wonder what has become of even such shred of decency as their spiritual progenitor found grace to exhibit two thousand years ago.

HAS the House of Lords killed the houseless Englishman's great expectations or has it merely stunned them? When the Lords, by that gentle method of preventing a "second reading," put an end to the Ministry of Health Bill the other day, they also ended the cash subsidy to housebuilders. It is only fair to say, however, that the cash subsidy has not looked like a great expectation for some time. The resemblance has faded steadily as the housing muddle was stirred and thickened by Parliament. More than a year ago it was generally realized that decent houses for English workers could not be built at a price which would enable them to earn interest on the investment. The workers could not pay the rents that were required. A house that once cost £300, for example, had risen to £1,000, but as an £800 house was the maximum on which it might be possible to collect a rent that would pay interest, upkeep and depreciation, there was a shortage of £200 staring the housebuilder in the face. Where was that £200 to come from? Very simple, indeed, said Parliament, and passed the new Housing Act which compelled local authorities to levy a special tax of a penny in the pound and to use the proceeds toward making good the £200 gap, and as the tax would not pay more than half the deficit, the Government agreed to make good the balance out of the national treasury.

OFF they started on this promising tack, yet no houses appeared. Money was hard to get, complained the local authorities. It is probable that the sight of the new tax, and the hint of others yet to come, did not stir them to what would be called hearty efforts, so the Government, helpless to enforce its own mandate, went off on yet another tack. This time it offered a cash subsidy, varying with the size of the house, of from £130 to £160 to anyone who would be so kind as to build a house. But still there was no rush. There were a great many rumours and a great many plans, but no houses. Yet, said the poor Government, the principle must be right, so it raised the subsidy to a maximum of £260. But still no houses appeared—at least figuratively speaking of a country that is 500,000 houses short and has an annual need of 100,000 new houses to meet. Of course, the House of Commons may, if it likes, restore the subsidy which by killing the Health Bill the Lords have ended, since it is really a question of money, and over that the Lords have no control. We shall see. In the meantime we may amuse ourselves watching the way of the subsidy in Holland, Finland, and Denmark. Those countries are also trying to lift themselves by their bootstraps—for surely the process of raising taxes to pay subsidies is nothing else, as long as the land- and credit-increments flow in increasing measure into the pockets of those who own land and monopolize credit.

ADMIRAL VON SCHEER, commander of the German fleet at Jutland—a naval hero whom the English will perhaps remember as long as they remember Nelson, though for different reasons—is attempting just now to blow the idea of a "naval holiday" right out of the water. According to the Admiral, the difficulties that the British ships got into at the Skaggerak have somewhat unsettled the British mind, just as the war has pinched the British pocketbook. The politicians and the experts do not know what sort of ships to build, or where to get the money to build them with; a naval holiday is necessary in order that Imperial England may have a chance to pull herself together. If the United States calls a halt in building operations while England is taking breath, we shall thus lose a great opportunity to overtake our rival, and the race will begin again, at the end of the holiday, with Britain still well in the lead. Hence, the rest-period is out of the question, and energetic construction on our part is the only alternative to universal and permanent disarmament.

THE Admiral seems to forget that we know quite as little as the British about the naval lessons of the war; or perhaps he thinks that the length of our national purse

prepares us to build mightily, with small regard for the fighting qualities of the product. At any rate, the argument of technical uncertainty applies at least as fully to the American as to the British situation, and we hope that it will be energetically used where other arguments are of no effect. It seems to us that our hottest imperialist ought to be able to see that we are taking a long chance when we invest our billions in ships which may be worth no more than rusty tomato-cans when the millennial year of 1924 rolls around.

IT would be interesting to know how many of the people of this and other countries who are contributing to the fund for relief of starvation in Central Europe, stop to inquire why there should be starvation in Central Europe. It is human to wish to help those in distress, but one would think it were also human to inquire somewhat into the causes of a distress which grows worse instead of better as time passes. The people of Central Europe were self-supporting before the war; why are they not getting back to that condition, now that the war has been over for more than two years? In other words, why are they not producing? To be sure, they suffered a great deal during the war; they lost a great many men; but so did France suffer greatly and lose as many as 68% of her youth, yet France is not in need of charity on a national scale. If the people who are aiding the Central Empires would begin thinking along these lines a little, they would undoubtedly come to see the absurdity—not to say criminality—of Allied officials in adopting and maintaining treaty-conditions which will keep the people of Central Europe a perpetual charge on foreign charity. They would see that these provisions are impracticable and they would so emphatically demand their alteration that Allied statesmen would be bound to give respectful heed to their demands.

THIS paper has already called attention to the manifest absurdity of attempts to relieve starvation by pouring food-supplies into Central Europe while the Allies, under the conditions of the peace treaty, drain them out again in levies upon the defeated countries for fowls, cattle, sheep and pigs. It is equally absurd to undertake the expense of transporting food to the Central Empires when a large part of their distress might be relieved once for all by the withdrawal of the army of occupation. A cartoon from *Simplicissimus* has recently come to our notice, maintaining that to feed one soldier of the army of occupation, four German children must be starved. We are inclined to believe that this is no exaggeration; for it is improbable that the Allied armies of occupation—which number 100,000 men—and the Allied Rhineland Commission are stinting themselves in any way; they would hardly feel called upon to be economical with the money of conquered nations. Some weeks ago, when the question of the expense of the occupation was up in the Reichstag, one of the members aptly reminded the American people that "all this charitable work, such as the Quakers and other organizations are doing, is useless so long as we are being bled to death by the troops of occupation." What these people need above all is not charity; it is simple justice and a fair chance to help themselves; and in this connexion we are glad to note that our own quota of troops in the occupied area, which alone has cost Germany \$75,000 a day, is to be cut in half.

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TOPICS OF THE DAY.

BRITISH OPINION BESTIRS ITSELF.

OUR hopes expressed a few weeks ago with reference to the state of Ireland are now being abundantly realized, quite as we were sure they would be. Our readers will remember our saying that the only influence able to curb the bloodthirsty cruelty of the British Government in Ireland was the influence of moderate British opinion; and that until this opinion bestirred itself, it seemed futile and even harmful for foreign opinion to have much to say. Accordingly, since then we have kept silence about Irish affairs. We are glad now to record that the policy of frightfulness is meeting with the general concern that it deserves. The Labour party, after receiving the report of a commission of inquiry, declares that the present British Government has plainly forfeited whatever right to govern Ireland it may have possessed, and demands withdrawal of all armed forces and the establishment of Irish constitutional autonomy. It has also decided upon a national campaign of enlightenment upon the Irish situation. A great meeting held in the Albert Hall last month was advertised "to protest against the lawless policy of reprisals countenanced by the British Government, and to vindicate the fundamental British principles of law and liberty." The chairman was Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck, and among the speakers were Lord Buckmaster, the Bishop of Peterborough and the Rev. Dr. Horton. Thirty members of the University of Cambridge have put out a manifesto to all Cambridge men who share their sentiments, saying, "If we are asked what special concern we as Cambridge men have in these matters, we would call to mind the general condemnation of the representatives of the German universities for uttering no word of protest against the conduct of their Government during the war." Lord Bryce says, "Never since 1798 have the forces of the Crown so disregarded their duty, nor have Ministers tried to palliate such excesses," and expresses hope that national opinion may be aroused "to see that the good fame of England shall no longer suffer at the hands of those who ought to preserve it."

The British liberal press has been quite freely quoted in our own newspapers, and the utterances of representative liberals as well. The Government's policy has become too much even for Sir John Simon; he said the other day that while he utterly condemned the horrible murders of British officers, still there was a great difference between murder and outrage committed by a gang of assassins, and outrages and illegalities committed by servants of the Crown. The reign of terror in Ireland has also been pretty thoroughly exhibited in the American press, so we need not pause upon its details. What we wish to point out now is simply that British moderate opinion has at last awakened and given the cue for decency and humanity all over the world. When Lord Bryce and Lord Buckmaster, tried and ancient friends of the Government, speak as they do, and when the *Westminster Gazette* bespeaks "an effective protest against the methods of terror and oppression that are now applied to Ireland," one can be reasonably sure that they are voicing a considerable popular sentiment of disgust and repugnance.

How many of us remember the British Official Paper on German atrocities, issued only six short years ago? It bore Lord Bryce's name. It represented German atrocities in Belgium and France as

inexpiable offences. The British Government published that pamphlet and circulated it wherever it would do the most good to the cause that the British Government was then serving. Now, six years later, the German Government in Belgium is no longer in question, but the British Government in Ireland; the British Government pursuing against Ireland the course of indiscriminate murder, maiming, arson and terrorism that it pursued against our own ancestors, that it pursued against the defenceless women and children of the Boers, that it pursues in India. All one need do is turn back to the Bryce pamphlet on German atrocities and compare what one finds there with what one reads daily in the *London Herald*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *London Daily News*, or even in the reprints and telegraphic dispatches that find their way into the press of the United States. Is it to be supposed that the moderate element among the British people, that Lord Bryce himself, are not making this comparison and that the utter ignominy of it is not sinking into their own minds? We do not know the English people well, perhaps, but we know them well enough to know that such a supposition is impossible; and so indeed, we find it. It was the great Irishman, Edmund Burke, who praised "the ancient and inbred integrity and piety, good nature and good humour" of the English people, and declared these qualities to be ultimately dependable. We think it is beyond peradventure that they are now at last to the fore, and that their effective pressure will shortly paralyse the mailed and bloody fist which the British Government extends over Ireland.

OUR PASTORS AND MASTERS.

THE first year of national prohibition has gone by, and the practical consequences of the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act are about what the judicious foresaw they would be. Such benefits as have accrued to the country are those which the most determined opponents of sumptuary legislation would have cheerfully conceded before the fact. The question now is only whether they are worth having at the price. No one pretends, probably, that in those sections of the country where public opinion is unfavourable, the law is well obeyed or well enforced; and this is not good for law in general. If law in a democracy is "whatever the people will back up"—which we think is one of the best definitions of law that we ever met—then obviously no very healthy respect for law can be bred by the cynicism which creates statutes known to be unenforceable. But we have recently spoken in some detail of this aspect of sumptuary legislation, and mention it now only to wonder at the curious inconsistency which rallies so many of the self-styled friends of law and order to the support of sumptuary law. If they were true friends or wise friends, one would think that they might be more jealous of the general respect for law, and dislike to see it frittered away in mere cynical and hypocritical levity.

Our own great objection to prohibition, however, has never been nearly as much to prohibition itself as to the civilization that goes with it. Prohibition's chief interest, we think, is only as the index to what manner of spirit we, as a nation, are of. A civilization which is ever striving after a more and more highly organized interest in personal conduct, is not a happy civilization to live in, even for one whose personal conduct is wholly blameless. We think that some of our liberal friends who advocated prohibition, or at least did not resent it, may perhaps have overlooked this. The teetotaller finds, quite as much as the drinker,

that the hardness and dullness of our civilization, never over-gracious or over-amiable, its tedium and ennui, have of late greatly increased; and he can easily perceive that this is not because of prohibition itself, but because of the sudden and immense predominance of the spirit which has among many others, one outward and visible expression in prohibition. Prohibition in itself makes but little one way or another; but as a registration of that spirit, it is discouraging and benumbing.

It is natural that we as a people should be apt to mind one another's business and enjoy regulating one another's conduct. Our history furnishes several good reasons for this, and we have in recent issues gone somewhat into the more obscure and powerful of them. To speak of them compendiously *en passant*, however, perhaps we can not do better than resort to our old device of dramatization, and say that the commercial life of our nation was shaped by Gradgrind, our religious life by Chadband, our social and public life on its lighter side by Quinion, and on its more serious side by Pecksniff. These four worthies have fixed our ideals in all those departments of life; and they have exercised an iron control over our education, over our secondary schools, colleges and universities, and over the institutional voices of our society, such as the press, the theatre and the pulpit. Now, these four old friends of ours have a constitutional horror of human freedom. The natural human aspiration for freedom is to them something irregular and vicious; and even worse and more perverted is the notion that human beings should find happiness in freedom. Therefore when anyone has come forward to erect this aspiration into a philosophy of conduct and to preach that philosophy, and justify it by the happiness which ensues upon its practice, they regard him as a dangerous enemy of the race. Under these circumstances it is, as we say, natural that as a people we should be exceedingly suspicious and distrustful of freedom and instinctively move to repress it when we can. It is also natural for every one to make a great virtue of his own training and tenets; and we can all find an easy and profitable opportunity to do that by keeping a good sharp eye on our neighbours and seeing to it that they walk as closely as possible to the line which Gradgrind, Chadband, Quinion and Pecksniff have marked out as the proper one for all humanity to walk by. During the war this opportunity was enormously enlarged; one could put in almost all one's time in the assiduous practice of this virtue; and it is due, we think, to this unwonted exercise—of which national prohibition was but a single practical outcome—that the tone and temper of American life has so remarkably changed in respect of its general amenity and interest.

For the one trouble with any civilization dominated wholly by our four old friends, is that it is not *interesting*, it does not permanently satisfy the human spirit. The human race has an indefeasible love for what is graceful, amiable and becoming, and is somehow aware that those qualities can flourish only under freedom. Hence its restlessness, irritability, its rather conventional and outright hypocrisy under the dragooning of our four old friends. We are all more or less like young Tom Gradgrand and his sister Louisa; in spite of all the counter-attractions of Coketown's life, in spite of the best schooling that Mc-Choakumchild can give, in spite of the moving and ever-present example of Josiah Bounderby, our perverse hearts will wander off in scandalous dalliance with Sleary and the performing dog. Our civilization offers Gradgrind's old cure for these vagrant

instincts after freedom: namely, more and stricter legislation; more objects to be proscribed; more ways of life to be closed or straitened; more unhappiness and unloveliness to be deliberately cultivated; and the end of all this, and the end of the innumerable Toms and Louisas too, alas!—will be what they must be.

Unless, indeed, we all resolutely turn our backs upon our four sturdy old monitors, realizing that the forces of nature are on our side and not on theirs, that the instincts for freedom, for beauty, for a graceful and amiable social life, are true primary instincts and that our business is to follow them. Whisky, tobacco, cards, dancing, one or another mode of Sunday observance—these do not in themselves much matter. It does not in itself greatly matter that a Boston sculptor was the other day haled before the judgment-seat and fined ten dollars for working at his art on Sunday. It does not in itself greatly matter that a business man of New York was lately yanked out of his office and brought to book for being at his desk on Sunday. What matters is the permanent failure in interest, the hardness and hideousness, of a civilization that makes place for this inflamed concern with personal conduct, that resents and disallows any just conception of the individual, and tends constantly to a featureless uniformitarianism. What matters is that, for life to be truly fruitful, life must be felt as a joy; and that where freedom is not, there can be no joy; and that where Gradgrind, Chadband, Quinion and Pecksniff prevail, there can be no freedom. What matters, in a word, is the heightened and continued ascendancy of Gradgrind, Chadband, Quinion and Pecksniff in our civilization; and until that ascendancy be, from first to last, utterly broken down, nothing else matters much, or can matter.

A CREED FOR HUMANISTS.

By strange good fortune, it has pleased Divine Providence to give us among our friends a profound pessimist, whose talk is a distillation of his spirit.

"Society is sick," says he, diving overboard with the conversation in his teeth, "Society is sick; but when I say that, I do not mean to imply that I think the condition is temporary. It is chronic, congenital, and, as far as I can see, incurable. All kinds of remedies have been prescribed, but we never give any of them a real trial—partly because no one person ever had sensitiveness enough to see the truth, and strength enough to act up to it. Really, it seems to me that the brains of society are always trying to go one way, while the legs are going the other. We know next to nothing, socially speaking; but we do a lot less than we know. That's what I mean when I say that society is sick."

The last time our friend dropped in, his plaint lodged with us for a couple of days, at the end of which time it occurred to us that *that* is just about what the psycho-analyst means when he says that an individual is sick; the ideal and the actual being sufficiently in conflict in the individual's mind, out comes a neurosis. What is it, then, that this contest of social brains and social legs has produced, if not a permanently neurotic society?

When an over-wrought patient goes to a psychoanalyst for a confessional, invariably the question comes, "What are your dreams?" The practitioner hopes to discover the real self of the patient, to learn what it is that lies below the surface. In the principles of his new art, it is laid down that in dreams there is more of self-revelation than in acts. Upon

the self-revelation of dreams, then, rather than upon the history of acts, the psycho-analyst bases his hopes and fears for his patient's future.

If all this applies in some vague way to the social organism, our sociologists might well give rather less attention to the history and statistics of human accomplishment, and very much more to the dreams of creative artists. When we speak here of dreams, we distinctly do not mean the Utopian visions that have lifted up men's hearts since the days of Plato and Thomas More and Saint-Simon. We mean those great spontaneous works of genius which reveal the character of the individual human being at its best, and at its worst; we mean the dreams which gave birth to Hamlet, Jean Valjean, Jude, Hedda Gabler; and peopled the pages of "War and Peace" with a thronging multitude of men and women whose spiritual life is reality itself.

We mean likewise all those lesser writings that draw out the great tribute, "Yes, this is human, this is *true*." The childlike friendliness, the baffled kindness and simplicity with which Barbusse's *poilus* went about their tasks in the rottenness of the trenches—this is as much a part of the truth about the great war as all the dark stories of horror and bestiality, and all the long record of ruin and death that the conflict left behind.

To-day the world needs these dreams as it has seldom needed them before. The man who put all his faith in the achievements of society must have buried that faith somewhere beneath the wreckage that covers a continent still swarming with armies. Surely he must believe that society is hopelessly diseased, incurably mad. Yet the creative-artist sees in the human soul certain qualities that somehow out-ride circumstance. Selfishness thrives in prosperous as in evil times. War makes a mockery of altruism and devotion, and turns these very virtues to the work of death.

But the lean years and the fat years pass away, new generations succeed the old, and the human spirit has still the heights and depths of yesterday. War is piled on famine, and famine on war, and still the artist knows that in the real self of this sick society, in the hearts of its tortured members, there is not evil only, but good also, both seeking everlastingly for satisfaction. In society, as in the neurotic individual who has fine qualities within himself, these good qualities are crushed, distorted, consumed in internal struggles, and the resultant life is not consistently and comfortably evil, or triumphantly good, but tortured, bewildered, futile.

In the very violence of the struggle between the two souls that tear at the soul of man and the soul of society, the artist finds an essential reality that reduces colliding planets and stray stars to nothing. For the Shakespeare, the Goethe, the Tolstoy, the Ibsen, who comprehends the double nature of man, there need be no final discouragement while the life of the race goes on. The bafflements and failures of society can not beat down the spirit of the artist who knows the magnificence as well as the meanness of the common soul. In open defiance of the past, he will proclaim that in the great qualities of the human spirit, imperishable and wellnigh as universal as evil fortune, there are everlasting possibilities of rich and abundant human life. While men understand Man, these dreamers will not be silenced; and while they still speak, who among us shall dare to say that our monkey's inheritance will hold the race earth-bound in perpetuity?

THE INFECTION OF RESPECTABILITY.

RESPECTABILITY makes most persons furtive sooner or later. The original candour and lusty vigour of "The Beggar's Opera," which has lately been adroitly transplanted to New York by Mr. Arthur Hopkins after a modern pruning in London, and the richness it bespeaks even yet for that far-off time when people said what we call naughty things when they thought them, gives a complete measure of the dirtiness of our own still Puritan times. The process of sluicing out the poisoned natural impulses that Cromwell had managed to keep festering in the dark will continue for some time to be called by respectable historians the licence of the Restoration. The creator of "The Beggar's Opera" played his part in the widening circles of that movement; and the reappearance of his work on our own stage at this clock-moment and its references to our own life are a pleasantly ironic reminder of the recurrent stupidity in human history.

All respectability in human society is based upon a desire for precedence. The objective of the respectable man is to forget as far as possible everything that implies that he is an animal like other men, at least for public purposes. This striving occurs more frequently in a democratic society, where there are no recognized pigeon-holes of rank for one to enter upon being born. A duke need have little fear of recognizing his own humanity and of having it recognized by others; for when all is said and done he is still a duke. But an ordinary democratic mortal must try to deny all his senses before his fellow democrats, in order to elevate himself as close to the god-like state as possible. In effect, this is respectability, with which our world is horribly familiar.

The great curse of respectability is that in time it begins to infect the best layers of society. Persons who are always closely at grips with the problems of self-preservation are usually most honest about life. They express their wants simply, clearly and forcibly, and call all spades by their right names. Little hair-splitting may be found among those who starve once or twice a year, and few sophistries. They see life clearly and see it whole if anybody ever can. But in time respectability becomes so intimately associated in their minds with the pleasures and usufructs of a continued round of square meals that it becomes desirable. Like a sun-shadow moving over a landscape, respectability begins to catch up the lower marginal groups in its fringes just at a time when the top layers may be beginning to lie in white sunlight. There are free persons nowadays who say and think easily and clearly what they want to say and think. But those who once, in the pioneering days, did live without inhibitions—merchants, money-traders and farmers—long ago entered the respectable classes and now live under a strict law of propriety; and after them have gone all the supporters of their society.

The stage is the mirror of this evolution. Mr. Raymond Hitchcock, who is a keen and scholarly observer of the American theatre, declares that on the high-priced stage the performer may say God-damn and hell, where such words as adenoids, stomach-trouble and vomit are under a taboo, although on the lower-priced arena he may without hesitation say adenoids, stomach-trouble, and vomit, but must halt at God-damn and hell. However this may be, it is still true that the blight of respectability has crept downward through the theatre. As a result the splendid vulgarity of the old variety stage and the burlesque house is gone, and a sly, furtive nastiness has taken its place. American respectability has notoriously

destroyed the French farce in adaptation. The French arrive at comedy by disclosing the oppositions of sex, and the American adaptation makes comedy by pretending to hide them. This dishonesty is one of the methods of the respectable.

Mr. Hopkins, and those who were responsible for the original production of this modern version of "The Beggar's Opera," have had to make terms with the psychology of respectability, which does not vary greatly between the Lyric Theatre at Hammersmith and the Greenwich Village Theatre in New York. The very quietude, however, with which these sluts, wenches, jades, baggages, pimps, trolls and trollops—"Not an honest man or woman amongst them," says the Beggar—are paraded, gives an added thrill to their appearance before respectable people. In the old days, "The Beggar's Opera" must have been a divinely rough and ready entertainment. But that time is gone these many years, and the greatest concession to be won from respectability in our theatre is that perhaps you can say anything you want, if you are sure to say it in the right tone of voice.

A PATH WHERE NO MAN THOUGHT.

I RECENTLY visited a friend who is spending a holiday on a miniature farm in the back country of New Jersey. He is a clerk in a wholesale ribbon-house, and wears his Arrow-brand as though it were a distinction. It was a warm day, and I murmured something about the cooling drinks of other days.

"Beer?" said he, and opened a little cellar-door before his cottage. More in curiosity than in surprise or pleasurable expectancy, I followed him down into the moist, earthy vault. In the low light, I distinguished several bottles of greenish fluid.

"That's a queer colour," I protested.

"That? Oh, that's not beer; that's my elderberry-bloom wine. And there," pointing to another corner, "is my dandelion cordial; and here," he lifted a magnesia bottle, "is my buttercup champagne. It hasn't cracked any of the bottles yet, so I don't know how it will turn out."

He finally dragged forth a catsup bottle; the stopper with a little encouragement leapt open with a bang and a sizz, and aside from a superfluity of foam, we consumed the stuff without difficulty. As I was draining the glass, oblivious to the yeasty dregs and contemplating the wholesale ribbon-clerk, his damp cell, and the regimented pints and quarts, a great light flashed upon me. "This is marvellous!" I exclaimed.

"You like it?" he said, eagerly.

"The beer? No, it is rotten. But you—and the thousands that will be like you—are splendid; you are the ushers of a new world where there shall be no more machines, and man at last will be set free to build with his own hands what pleases his own desires. This is no other than Beauty and Justice which you will bring, and the dream of Plato. It is News from Nowhere that finally comes from somewhere—and that it comes from a dirt cellar is an omen. Tinker up your ales, my friend, your daffodil whiskies, and cowlspil liqueur; fine and refine your cordials; brew tool-wisdom in your ribboned head, a homely, honest taste in your flat palate, and deftness in your white hands. You shall embroider the golden dandelion on the banners of your marching guilds, and wear the elderberry for a sign. I salute the pre-Raphaelites of Industry, and the return of the craft to liberate the hand of man!" My friend, I am glad to say, understood no word of this, for a self-conscious apostle is a bore.

A year ago who could have foretold that prohibition would point the way to the spiritual salvation of modern man? We were, of course, prepared for emptier jails, a slump in wife-beating, and a general letting-down of social exuberance, which sometimes goes by the name of peace and is confused with civilization. That is, we were ready for Kansas—but not Utopia. Again, certain long-headed observers had predicted that saloon-patronage would be transferred to labour-union locals; and claimed that the strength of the lumber-unions in the North-west was in measure due to the weakness of their beer. This was hopeful, but tediously and uncertainly so. On the whole, it was felt that Mr. Volstead, in locking the breweries while we had our eyes on the bulletin-boards, locked new manacles upon an over-manacled land, and that the white ribbon was a *cordon sanitaire* thrown about human nature. Yet,

... the end men looked for cometh not
And a path is there where no man thought,
So hath it fallen here.

This conclusion of "Bacchae" is appropriately the conclusion which far-seeing men to-day derive from the eighteenth amendment.

It is almost superfluous to recall in these columns that not capitalism, but the empire of the machine is the ultimate enemy of human freedom. The birthright of man is to create, and the machine has robbed him of this right, for a mess of pottage which he is pleased to call productivity; it has substituted production for the product, drudgery for labour; and the common lot of men is a mess while the few enjoy the pottage. Factory discipline, which is a contest between Prussianism on the part of the employer and sabotage on the part of the worker, in other words, murder racing with suicide so far as creative man is concerned; division of labour, or taking nine men to make a tailor; and the efficiency ritual, invoking for relentless obedience, a god from the machine, have combined to deplete man's creative energies during his hours of work. Without this sacrifice of humanity, as mere grease for the wheels, machine-production seems impossible. Like the railway-tariff which catches the commuter coming and going, the same machine, which debilitates the man as a worker, debauches him as a consumer of the goods he has helped the machine to produce. The whole mechanistic stew of currently-advertised products which offer to furnish a man with machine legs, machine thoughts, and a machine voice, have deprived him of the scant hope of cultivating his humanity in his leisure. He has not been permitted even the child's privilege of playing his own games, and during the hours when he is not a muzzled ox, he must act the Strasburg goose. A man to-day eats meat he has not roasted, bread he has not baked, and breakfast foods and canned delicacies that neither God nor the Devil had a finger in; he wears clothes he has not spun or sewed, lives in houses he has not built, sits on chairs he has not shaped, hears music he has not played, sees drama he has not acted, adorns his life with egregious superfluities, all the while stumping ceaselessly in the treadmill of the machine world that fashions these things; and when driven desperate with his eunuch existence, he drinks a cup he has not brewed, and so, in the end, makes one thing at least—a fool of himself. Or, finally, when the lordly machines entangle themselves in their appetite for victims and drag man by the belt into the fields of war, he goes gladly; for to kill—on occasion, after the machines are surfeited—is one of the few human occupations left the race.

Yet the Congress of the United States with its customary irrelevance has unwittingly brought the tide to a turn. It forbade—or was it the lordly machines laying a cold lever upon their favourite puppets?—certain machines to ferment and brew, so that man might play the ox and goose without his occasional monkey-tricks.

Once the machines stopped, as upon a signal, men crept from their lethargy, their right hand remembered its cunning, and for the first time in many decades, they have begun to ply a common art. You hear them whispering in subway trains, in that stentorian explosion that constitutes a subway whisper (the machines hate the men to talk as they hate them to drink), the secrets of the craft; the noon-hour and street-corner are given to loving disquisitions on how to reduce the yeasty flavour, put glow into the colour, or enrich the bouquet. This homely alchemy, whatever it may do to their brew, tonics their souls with an obsolete virtue. I have seen a common bank-clerk hold a bottle to the light, his eyes lambent with pride, and exclaim with the fervour of Hans Sachs rounding off a prize song: "Oh, boy!" The open fields are canvassed for simples and the blossomed distillations of the summer sun. Rosemary for cordial and pansies for hocks. A good wine in these days needs its bush, providing it be the elderberry, currant, blackberry, gooseberry, dewberry, whortleberry, huckleberry, raspberry, or, so be you deft to liquify its damask soul, the rose. Mock not; these ferments, which are a compress of nature's laughter, may not be Chateau Yquem or memorable Ay Baudois, but the young men and old who go gathering wisdom from the hillsides will learn the mysteries in good time, Dionysian and Gambrinial. Chartreuse was not made in a day, and the early Romans, it is said, knew so little as to flavour their Falernian with sea-water and asafœtida.

Like all manly arts, the craft is not merely good in its own exercise, but it breeds and brings upon its train good and true things. The vintner and the brewer were not made to work alone; when Willie brews a peck o' malt, Rob and Allen come to see. There lurks a conviviality in the process perhaps more edifying and certainly less obnoxious than in the results.

Even before the fateful amendment, a society grew up in a Western city comprised of the wits, eminences and philosophers

of the region, who took the name "Eudæmonists" and laboured to find a way out of the great white trap. I have no doubt but that to-day they are masters in the new guild, beguiling a Burbank to increase the sugar in the daisy, laying tribute on timothy, fennel, and other grasses and herbs close to every man's hand; and that one sort of creation is stimulating another.

Indeed the hope of the craft lies here. In its own field it is spreading like the weeds it feeds upon. A close friend of mine, a woman hitherto devoted to sociology, politics, and other unproductive gentilities, has now given herself to the problem of increasing the body of a berry concoction without the alloy of unethical (and unconstitutional) sugar. The development is plain: a man begins with the crude raisin; he advances into profound viticultural and pomological and botanical operations; the nicety of his taste and the demand for creative expression grows with his powers; consultation, debate, and the mutual delight of criticism and hope at the social uncorking, must spur him at length to new realms of craftsmanship. The movement is young, but I detect the budding of home-made song. Glee and catches, not manufactured by the hirelings of the phonograph or dance-hall, but born of the fellowship of handiwork and the joy of the artist, are, to be sure, unheard as yet, but hang in the air.

It fell about on New Year's Day
When the wind blew shrill and cold
That Tansy Jack, the shoe-clerk, tapped
His red, red cask and old.

There may be ballads, too.

From song it will be but a step to dress. A man can't sing in a Troy collar and a Rochester pair of pants. He must, in the end, clothe his person, like his palate and his soul, with products of his own native and intrinsic workmanship. Perhaps we shall be graced with a Constitutional bar against beds and houses, but even if this stimulus is wanting, now that the break is made, we are bound to learn one day that "there is the same fitness in a man's building his own house as there is in a bird's building its own nest." Burdock cider and carrot wine are ungainly first fruits, but a new Maronean awaits us at the goal. It will not do, then, to speculate with terror upon the first cottage from the hammer and saw of a subway-guard, or the first child of the stock-broker's adventure in millinery. Time shall tell, in its funeral oration over the dead machines, that the shell-fish, to quote Thoreau again, did not get "its mother-o'-pearl shell by such a contract as the inhabitants of Broadway their Trinity Church."

MARVIN M. LOWENTHAL.

A STUDY IN LITERARY TEMPER.

It is late in the day to speak about a story that was written nearly a century ago; and without a special purpose, one would perhaps not be justified in doing so. My special purpose is to offer some practical suggestions to the younger and more promising story-writers who have chosen to deal with certain phases of American life. Let me name, for example, Mr. Sinclair Lewis, Mr. Floyd Dell, Mr. Sherwood Anderson and Mr. Waldo Frank. These men write with sincerity and ability; their reviewers say that they have genius, and I should be glad to say so too, if I did not share Professor Pearson's trouble with that word. I do not know, frankly, what genius is. I do know, however, what ability is, and these writers have it. They have it to such a degree that any critic should be glad to put himself at their service; and the best service I can render is by way of discussing with them a story which does not exactly "palpitate with modernity," perhaps, but which they will nevertheless find useful to recall.

Nikolai Vassilievitch Gogol, about the year 1834, published some tales of the town of Mirgorod, a continuation of his series called "Evenings at a Dikanka Farmhouse." They got an immediate and classic popularity in Russia. Mrs. Hapgood translated some of them into English, and two or three were included in a little volume published in New York in 1886, which seems to have gone out of print and become rather inaccessible, perhaps shouldered out of the way by the success of "Dead Souls" and "Taras Bulba."

This is a pity. One who is prowling about in Russian literature can ill afford to miss the vivid story of the devil-man Basavriuk or the wonderfully funny account of how Ivan Ivanovitch quarrelled with his old friend Ivan Nikiforovitch, and what came of it. Perhaps the increasing interest in Russia's cultural life may in time touch the flinty heart of some publisher and cause him to reissue Mrs. Hapgood's little volume.

One of the stories in this excellent little anthology is called "Old-Fashioned Farmers." It is short; only forty-six pages, running about 200 words to the page. It deals with the life of an old couple on a remote South Russian farm. A dozen pages describe the farm and its activities; a dozen more describe Athanasii Ivanovitch and his wife Pulcheria Ivanovna, their habits and their demeanour towards guests; a dozen more are taken up with scraps of insignificant conversation. Half a dozen pages are devoted to the death and burial of Pulcheria Ivanovna; there is a page or so about the subsequent life of the widower; and the story ends with the death of Athanasii Ivanovitch five years later.

Only that. The primary reason why I have chosen this story is that it stands at an extreme in the simplicity and unpretentiousness of its material. Nothing could be more commonplace, more limited and inconsiderable than the external interests of these two old people and their relations with the world at large. My next reason is that the story shows so clearly the economy and fastidious precision in the use of those materials, which is a mark of the literary artist's sure tact. The stock episodes of even such colourless lives as these, the episodes which the journalist-novelist or novelist-journalist would be apt to dwell upon, Gogol merely intimates or else exhibits in a couple of sentences, and always with a single eye for the total effect which he intends to produce. His power of observation is disciplined to a sense of absolute proportion in this total effect. For example, all he says about the old man's service in the army, is this:

At one time, in his youth, Athanasii Ivanovitch served in the militia and was afterwards brevet-major; but that was very long ago, and Athanasii Ivanovitch hardly ever thought of it himself.

Half that sentence states the fact; the other half contributes a literary foreshortening and shades the fact into Gogol's picture in perfect and effective proportion. Just so, too, with another outstanding episode; namely, an elopement:

He even very carefully abducted Pulcheria Ivanovna, whose parents did not wish to give her to him: but this, too, he recollected very little about; at least, he never mentioned it.

Even through the faint and far-off medium of a translation, nothing could be better, nothing could be more admirably subordinated to the total impression that the writer intends his general picture to convey. On the other hand, when dealing with circumstances which are in themselves most trivial but which are relatively important to his special purpose, circumstances which really give body to this total impression, his sense of proportion, his tact and discrimination among details, remain unembarrassed. For example, when one proposes to give a clear total impression of the lives of two persons, and allows oneself forty-six pages in which to do it, it needs great sureness and resolution to risk five of those precious pages—nearly one-ninth of one's whole space—on this:

Both the old folks, in accordance with old-fashioned customs, were very fond of eating. As soon as daylight dawned (they always rose early), and the doors had begun their many-toned concert, they seated themselves at table, and drank

coffee. When Athanasii Ivanovitch had drunk his coffee, he went out, and, flinging his handkerchief, said, 'Kish, kish! go away from the veranda, geese!' In the yard he generally encountered the steward: he usually entered into conversation with him, inquired about the work with the greatest minuteness, and communicated such a number of observations and orders as would have caused any one to wonder at his knowledge of affairs; and no novice would have ventured to suppose that such an acute master could be robbed. But his steward was a clever rascal: he knew well what answers it was necessary to give, and, better still, how to manage things.

After this, Athanasii Ivanovitch returned to the room, and said, approaching Pulcheria Ivanovna, 'Well, Pulcheria Ivanovna, is it time to eat something, perhaps?'

'What shall we have to eat now, Athanasii Ivanovitch—some wheat and tallow cakes, or some pies with poppy-seeds, or some salted mushrooms?'

'Some mushrooms, then, if you please, or some pies,' replied Athanasii Ivanovitch; and then suddenly a table-cloth would make its appearance on the table, with the pies and mushrooms.

An hour before dinner, Athanasii Ivanovitch took another snack, and drank vodka from an ancient silver cup, ate mushrooms, divers dried fish, and other things. They sat down to dine at twelve o'clock. Besides the dishes and sauce-boats, there stood upon the table a multitude of pots with covers pasted on, that the appetizing products of the savoury old-fashioned cooking might not be exhaled abroad. At dinner the conversation turned upon subjects closely connected with the meal.

'It seems to me,' Athanasii Ivanovitch generally observed, 'that this groats is burned a little. Does it strike you so, Pulcheria Ivanovna?'

'No, Athanasii Ivanovitch: put on a little more butter, and then it will not taste burned; or take this mushroom sauce, and pour over it.'

'If you please,' said Athanasii Ivanovitch, handing his plate, 'let us see how that will do.'

After dinner Athanasii Ivanovitch went to lie down for an hour, after which Pulcheria Ivanovna brought him a sliced watermelon, and said, 'Here, try this, Athanasii Ivanovitch; see what a good melon it is.'

'Don't trust it because it is red in the centre, Pulcheria Ivanovna,' said Athanasii Ivanovitch, taking a good-sized chunk. 'Sometimes they are red, but not good.'

But the watermelon slowly disappeared. Then Athanasii Ivanovitch ate a few pears, and went out for a walk in the garden with Pulcheria Ivanovna. On returning to the house, Pulcheria went about her own affairs: but he sat down on the veranda facing the yard, and observed how the storeroom's interior was constantly disclosed, and again concealed; and how the girls jostled one another as they carried in, or brought out, all sorts of stuff in wooden boxes, sieves, trays, and other receptacles for fruit. After waiting a while, he sent for Pulcheria Ivanovna, or went to her himself, and said, 'What is there for me to eat, Pulcheria Ivanovna?'

'What is there?' said Pulcheria Ivanovna; 'Shall I go and tell them to bring you some berry tarts which I had set aside for you?'

'That would be good,' replied Athanasii Ivanovitch.

'Or perhaps you could eat some kissel?'

'That is good, too,' replied Athanasii Ivanovitch; whereupon all was brought immediately, and eaten in due course.

Before supper Athanasii Ivanovitch took another snack. At half-past nine they sat down to supper. After supper they went directly to bed, and universal silence settled down upon this busy yet quiet nook.

The chamber in which Athanasii Ivanovitch and Pulcheria Ivanovna slept, was so hot that very few people could have stayed in it more than a few hours: but Athanasii Ivanovitch, for the sake of more warmth, slept upon the stove-bench; although the excessive heat caused him to rise several times in the course of the night, and walk about the room. Sometimes Athanasii Ivanovitch groaned as he walked about the room.

Then Pulcheria Ivanovna inquired, 'Why do you groan, Athanasii Ivanovitch?'

'God knows, Pulcheria Ivanovna! it seems as if my stomach ached a little,' said Athanasii Ivanovitch.

'Hadh't you better eat something, Athanasii Ivanovitch?'

'I don't know—perhaps it would be well, Pulcheria Ivanovna: by the way, what is there to eat?'

'Sour milk, or some stewed dried pears.'

'If you please, I will try them,' said Athanasii Ivanovitch. The sleepy maid was sent to ransack the cupboards, and Athanasii Ivanovitch ate a plateful; after which he remarked, 'Now I seem to feel relieved.'

If our younger American writers will consent to re-read and analyse this story, they will find, I think, that out of the scantiest and commonest materials, Gogol has contrived to present a total impression that is complete, sharp, vivid and abiding. One knows his two old people as well as he knows them; one would recognize them on the street. Moreover, the impression is wholly delightful. The story has great humour; it has immense pathos; and it combines these in just the right proportion for the maximum of effectiveness. Again, by using the story as a study in literary method, in tact and selective power, an example of writing with the eye fixed on the object and never distracted for an instant to the right or to the left, one can see how Gogol managed to do so much with so nearly nothing. Then, after they have carefully considered this model on all sides, I would say to our writers, *Do that*. If Mr. Anderson, Mr. Dell, Mr. Sinclair Lewis and Mr. Waldo Frank wish really to do something with American life, let them *do that*. I am not suggesting that they give us a mere copy or paraphrase of Gogol's work. Let them, I mean, aim at reproducing upon us, in whatever they undertake, the effect which Gogol produced upon his Russian readers; the effect, in the first place, of a total impression that is complete, sharp and powerful. Gogol's method, his literary tact, sureness and discrimination produce this, and producing it from such scanty and refractory material, can produce it from anything. Given sincerity, diligence, and ability, moreover—leaving genius out of account—this method can be competently acquired by anyone. But Gogol's story produces a total impression which is not only clear, vivid, powerful, but also delightful and memorable. To accomplish this, the method must operate continuously in the medium of a *temper*, a frame of mind; and this is come at by an entirely different order of discipline from that which is indicated by the method itself.

Let us look into this. In the first place, Gogol wrote of Russian life not because it was Russian but because it was handy, because it was the life he best knew. Hence he is concerned neither to praise nor to disparage it, or to prove this or that about it. As a literary man, he owes no allegiance to Holy Russia and bears no grudge against her; his allegiance is all to the human, the universal. As far as the essentials of the story go, Athanasii Ivanovitch might be an old-fashioned farmer of the Auvergne, the Romagna, Devonshire or Iowa. Gogol is concerned with the great primary facts of human life, great emotions, great spiritual experiences, great actions proceeding from these emotions and experiences; and these are the same wherever there are human beings. The reader is made to feel no prepossession either for Russian life or against it. He is aware that the writer is fully and wholly occupied with the great primary themes of his story—love, domesticity, habit, hospitality, kindness, rural charm, simplicity of heart, death, bereavement—and hence he goes eagerly along at an even pace with the writer, for these are his primary interests as well; he is much more interested in them than he is in being told even incidentally that Russian life is thus or so, or in being ever so cleverly shown that this or that about it is very good or shocking bad.

Disinterestedness is thus the first element of the temper in which Gogol's literary method operates, the temper which *floats* that method and makes it free to do its best. I may perhaps show our younger writers how easy it is to fail a little in this freedom from prepossession, by the example of their predecessors in my

own generation. Some of these appear beset by the compulsion to prove in all they write that American life is much better and happier than life elsewhere; some, that it is worse and more miserable; some, that it is noble and rich; some, that it is mean and poor. Mr. Howells's master-concern, for example, was with niceness, and all his ability and sincerity had to work in subordination to this master-concern. Mr. William Allen White's master-concern is with morality and Americanism, and it is to these that he must make offering of his firstfruits. Other writers seem to show a master-concern, or at least a lively and disturbing concern, with disparaging niceness, morality, Americanism. The human spirit, however, does not permanently go along with any of these writers, because it has no such master-concern. Its master-concern is with great emotions, great spiritual experiences, great actions; and the writer who exhibits these disinterestedly, by a competent method and with no ax of his own to grind, is at least on the threshold of a permanent place.

Again, in reading Gogol's story, our young writers will feel themselves carried along on a current of profound and genuine tenderness. Gogol shows up the oddities of the two old farm-folk with an unsparing hand, and has no end of fun in doing it; but he loves them, really and tenderly loves them. The chief reason why I quoted at full length the description of their terrible habit of eating, is that it brings out so well this indispensable element in the true literary temper. Turgenev could have written this passage; in his "Pyetushkov," for example, he has done quite as well. Flaubert, de Maupassant, Bourget, could not do it to save their lives, because with all their sincerity and ability, their admirable method and excellent disinterestedness, they do not really love their spiritual children. Here, again, I would point out to our younger writers a damaging failure in some of their literary predecessors. Curiously, too, this failure is most conspicuous in many of the journalist-novelists who have a sociological and reforming turn; *they don't like folks*. Mr. H. G. Wells's spiritual offspring seem at best to have but an uncanny fascination, sometimes a fetid fascination, for him; and he pursues them through their fortunes and misfortunes with no better than the "petrified feeling" that Burns speaks of. Mr. Locke does better, Mr. W. W. Jacobs best of all; but in all the English and American literature of my generation there is nothing to match the exquisite and moving tenderness that suffuses Gogol's pages. I observe with interest, too, how largely in America the cartoonists have picked up this element of temper which the writers have rejected, and how well they do with it. Clearly, Mr. Briggs and Mr. Webster have a genial tenderness for human beings. It is a pleasure, also, to praise the almost classic work of Mr. Hill. He portrays our Philistines as Philistines to the life, Philistines of Gath, with six fingers on every hand and on every foot six toes, four-and-twenty in number; but he likes them. I would wager that Mr. Fox likes the Skipper and the Terrible-tempered Mr. Bang. Hence the human spirit goes permanently along with the cartoonists and not with the novelists, because it, too, likes its Philistine neighbours; it likes Mr. Bang, who perhaps lives next door; it has for all these the same tenderness that Mr. Fox and Mr. Hill have for them.

Gogol wrote his Dikanka and Mirgorod stories just when the spirit of official nationalism was in full sweep over Russian literature. Ouarov, who was Minister of Public Instruction under Nicholas I, seems to have combined in himself the ignorant stupidity of Mr.

Palmer and the vicious obscurantism of Mr. Burleson, and to have exercised a despotic censorship worthy of either. In the words of the excellent historian Waliszewsky, "literature walked hand in hand with the police." Most writers yielded; a few stood out; and hence the literature of the period is an arid waste of servility, varied by occasional patches of dullness. Gogol, however, wrote as though this despotism did not exist; one would say that he had never even heard of it. His work manifests perfectly a third element in the true literary temper, *serenity*, and manifests it under the most difficult and unfavourable external circumstances.

There is every temptation now in America as there was then in Russia, to impair the literary temper by a fidgeting preoccupation with the external conditions of the literary life. I think I know those conditions as well as any one; rather better, perhaps, than the young writers whom I am now addressing, since I am at the unpopular time of life which can easily recall the America of better promise, the America of the 'eighties, and thus can measure the influence of Gradgrind, Chadband, Quinion and Pecksniff in shaping the America that now is. I also have said publicly more than most to show that the civilization of Gradgrind, Chadband, Quinion and Pecksniff is utterly impracticable and impossible. Still, good work, classic work, can be produced in that civilization; not easily or abundantly, but it can be produced. Gray managed to do it in England and Gogol in Russia, under similar conditions. I would like, therefore, to suggest to our younger writers that the best answer, the final answer, to the challenge of Gradgrind, Chadband, Quinion and Pecksniff is the production of classic work; and that this can be best done, not in the spirit of perpetual expostulation, but by serene disregard of the conditions which Gradgrind, Chadband, Quinion and Pecksniff pretend to impose. What Arnold said of Wordsworth might well be said of Gogol:

The cloud of human destiny,
Others will front it fearlessly
But who, like him, will *put it by*?

Our younger writers can no doubt fearlessly, even, perhaps, some of them a little truculently, confront the destiny arranged for them by Gradgrind, Chadband, Quinion and Pecksniff; there is indeed some evidence that they are so doing. But this is not what is needed, not what is good for literature or for themselves. The great thing is that they should maintain serenity, that they should *put it by*, thus proving themselves citizens of "a better country, that is, a heavenly"; for *le but essentiel de l'art est d'élever l'homme au-dessus de la vie vulgaire, et de réveiller en lui le sentiment de son origine céleste*. Gogol does this, and most of all perhaps by his detachment, his serenity, his profound unconsciousness of his circumstances. It has sometimes seemed to me that some of our critics especially, are so preoccupied with the enormities of Gradgrind, Chadband, Quinion and Pecksniff that they have little energy left for criticism, for holding up and expounding examples of great art, for making these accessible and attractive, and enabling their effective appropriation; and I have often wondered what they might accomplish if they were not so painfully overborne by the notion that as America is to-day, they can accomplish nothing.

Disinterestedness, tenderness, serenity: these are the elements of the literary temper which Gogol exhibits in this story from which I have ranged so far afield. Equipped with these, and with some further discipline in literary method, one wonders what the energy.

ability and sincerity of Mr. Sinclair Lewis might not give us in a few years. Might not Mr. Sherwood Anderson write some more stories of Winesburg, Ohio, that should take rank in power and permanence beside the stories of Mirgorod? I think it very possible; and it is because I think so, as I said at the outset, that I have thus hardly ventured to volunteer in the service of these writers.

ALBERT JAY NOCK.

CHANGING GERMANY.

IN Berlin the other day I came across an English friend of mine of pre-war times. He had made his career during the war and was now a member of one of those numerous Entente Commissions whom we less fortunate mortals are wont to see dashing through the streets in high-class motor-cars or dining on very good things behind the plate-glass panes of hotels which have become too expensive for the natives. Our handshake was rather cordial. On exchanging our opinions in the usual way on the questions bearing upon the war, we found that we did not differ so very much, after all. It is true that according to the Western fashion he was somewhat more inclined to make German militarism the scapegoat for most of the things that led to the outbreak, but as to Mr. Wilson, the Versailles Treaty and Mr. Lloyd George we evidently were pretty much of the same opinion. (It is curious, by the way, how in these things a sort of common European opinion seems to have formed itself, which extends even to the Government officials, and one only wonders why it has so little practical effect on the politics of the world!) But the aspect changed when the question of the Germany of to-day "swam into our ken." My friend does not belong to those whose knowledge of Germany is derived from the columns of the newspapers with the largest circulations; he had lived in this country before the war and used to look favourably upon many of our institutions and ways. So he spoke disapprovingly about his French colleagues in the Commission, their intense and ill-veiled hatred of everything German, their unquenchable thirst for revenge for the sufferings of four indescribable years; but while mentioning their apparently exaggerated distrust of the peacefulness and democratic trend of German feeling, he could not help giving vent to certain misgivings himself. The present mentality of Germany he confessed appeared a riddle even to him. I asked him what it was that he did not understand. He pointed to the curious fact that whereas the revolution professed to have done with German militarism, to have turned upside down the principles of policy in the State, one not only found all the old names as those of the leading men in high places and in public life, but in having to do with the German bureaucracy one noticed that the old spirit is kept alive there; in fact, that it is as vigorous and stubborn as ever. This, I suppose, is the baffling impression that a great many people abroad get from German affairs.

Now, it is true that outward appearances have not changed with us in Germany as some people might have expected when the red flag was hoisted on William II's palace in Berlin. The greater part of the royal palaces have been turned into museums, but the "Hohenzollernstrassen" have not become "Bebelstrassen," nor have the "Kaiser Wilhelm-

plätze" become "Liebknechtplätze," be it that the historical sense of the German race is too strong for violent changes of this sort or that the town councils are too short of money to bear the expenses of the rebaptism just now. Also we have not the words "*liberté, égalité, fraternité*," or rather their German equivalents, engraved on the front of our public buildings, because the national character is not at all given to manifestations of this sort. But the foreign observer must have noticed that one of the most conspicuous traits of German life has disappeared altogether: viz., the military spectacles, shows, parades, tattoos, etc. It is difficult to grasp the enormous importance of this fact. German militarism has been a stream powerful enough to inundate nearly the whole of Europe. Who is foolish enough to think that it would disappear in a space of two years? The question is not whether anything of it is left, but whether its sources are dry; and there is no doubt that they are drying up fast. The whole physiognomy of Germany will be changed before long by this process. The history of centuries shows that there is no nation in Europe which is less inclined by in-born tendencies to militarism and imperialism than the German race. It is different, of course, with Prussia. For about a century there has been going on in Prussia the struggle of militarism versus democracy. The victory of militarism in this fight was to all appearances as complete as could be.

The social life of the nation was deeply imbued by it. There was nothing of greater importance in the life of a young man of "good family" than his becoming "Reserve-officer." This, of course, was in the first place a social distinction. In fact, the whole nation was split up into two strata according to whether one were a "Reserve-officer" or not. One could not aspire to this high dignity if one kept, let us say, a store. Subaltern officials without university training were excluded, no Jews were admitted, etc. This system never found any serious resistance among the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, the ardent desire to be received into the pseudo-aristocratic military Samurai-class was never more strongly felt than in the years of Germany's immense mercantile expansion and industrial development. A representation of this state of things is to be found in Heinrich Mann's "*Der Untertan*," which, although disfigured by the author's tendency to caricature, gives on the whole a true impression.

Now, all countries know social distinctions of one kind or another, and from an ethical point of view it may be doubted if the monetary criterion that plays such an important part in Anglo-Saxon civilization is to be valued so much more highly, but the disastrous effect of the Prussian system consisted in its transferring military ideals and military ways of thinking into the life of the civilian. Conscription has not had in all nations where it exists the effect of militarizing the population. But one must take into account the different circumstances in Germany; the peculiar character of the army, that invincible army of the three glorious campaigns of 1864, 1866 and 1870, the envy of the world, the army that on the battlefields of Bohemia and of France had erected the new German Empire as evidence for Bismarck's conception of "blood and iron" as the only true international agents. Hence the military spirit was getting possession of the national mind. One

noticed it in outward things: the tone of speech, the gestures, the way of growing the beard. But it made itself felt in more important matters: in the way the leading strings of military opinion were noticeable in public life, and in the general tendency to replace civilian ways of thinking by military ways of thinking, and to consider all political opposition as being insubordination. We have seen what has become of this system, which reached a maniacal climax during the war, when its stubborn and stupid fight against the truth brought about the ruin of the nation.

The fatal effect of it upon the political life of Germany has never been more clearly visible than at present, after it has been done away with. During the last decades before the war all political ideas savouring of democratic progress, and especially of socialism, were kept by force outside official doors. Herr Hamman has recently, in his memoirs, recalled the remarkable fact that Bismarck in the 'eighties issued an order that every official who entered the Ministry (*Vortragender Rat*), even if it was the Ministry for Railways, had to draw up a memoir containing a statement about his political creed. This, of course, meant that everybody who desired advancement in the State had to profess to be a Conservative. The order was cancelled by his successor, but its spirit remained. It has often been said that one could not get an appointment as a watchman in Germany if one were a Socialist.

It is a curious phenomenon, which requires for its explanation an intimate knowledge of the national character of Germany and her political history, that so much valuable work should have been done not only in the commercial, industrial and scientific field, but also with regard to social reform, insurance, old-age pensions, etc., by people who were anything rather than politically liberal and broadminded. How terribly close the air was at the schools! How carefully every spark of democracy and socialism was stamped out at the universities! There was no Fabian Society with us. A German Fabian would have got his leave as "Reserve-officer" on the spot, his career in the State service would have been at an end, though he combined the faculties of Plato with those of Gladstone. The inner development of the German Socialist party is to be taken into consideration, too, in order to understand its lack of influence on the bureaucracy, but it nevertheless remains a fact that the enormous governmental pressure more than anything else is responsible for the bureaucracy of Germany remaining entirely clean of Socialists and democrats.

Now the great overthrow has come. New political blood ought to be infused into the veins of the diseased body of the nation. But where are the men? Those foreign critics who wonder at still finding the old names in the old places misjudge the situation entirely. The revolution has not been the triumph of republican and democratic ideas over monarchic and aristocratic ones represented by disputing members of the same class, but rather the triumph of the indignant, enraged masses over the infatuated ruling classes. The inmates of the State-coach rebelled against the insane coachman and arranged between themselves to go another way after having gone so far on the road to ruin, but it soon turned out that they could not drive. A great number of excellent men no doubt are

among their politicians, but the different branches of the State need experts. Where, for example, after thirty years of the most illiberal education of the whole youth of Germany, are the democratic or socialist teachers who might take the reins in hand at the high schools and universities in order to bring up the coming generation in an entirely new spirit. There are some, it is true, but they are *rari nantis in gurgite vasto*. So we have to recur to outsiders. But the position of outsiders in a place which requires training and special knowledge is not enviable. The new Government runs the risk, with experiments like these, of discrediting itself entirely, of becoming the laughingstock of the experts. So it naturally tries to compromise. The inmates hire the dismissed coachman again; they try to supervise him and to learn his trade meanwhile. But the passers-by wonder that they see the old coachman on the box!

LEVIN L. SCHUECKING.

THE ROBERT BURNS OF SWEDEN.

ONCE in a long while there comes a poet who captures a nation's heart by storm. Such was Robert Burns and such was Fröding. In each case the conquest was achieved by a two-fold gift, a power that alternated from graphic objectivity to the most poignant self-revelation, and in each the intrinsic charm of the poetry was enhanced by the tragic history of the poet. There are, however, as many points of difference as of resemblance, which will be readily perceived in a brief sketch of Fröding's career.

Gustaf Fröding was born 22 August, 1860, near Karlstad, in the pastoral province of Värmland. Of upper-middle class extraction, he inherited artistic talent and mental unsoundness from both parents. Almost from the first he was set to work out his own destiny. After a quiet boyhood amid the lakes and woods of his native district he was exposed at twenty to the unrestrained dissipations of continental university life at Upsala. This is a Spartan test for any spirit, and Fröding, with his inherited weakness, was almost doomed from the start. That he fought on, never losing his belief in ultimate good, is proof of a gallant and unusual temper.

After three years, Fröding left the university without a degree and, his small patrimony being spent, settled down to newspaper work in Karlstad. Though his studies had done little for him in a scholastic way, his literary bent was by now well established. Like Selma Lagerlöf, he was chiefly influenced by models from English literature: Scott's novels and the poetry of Byron, Shelley, and Burns. He had a rich storehouse in the lyrics of his countrymen Bellman, Tegnér, and Rydberg, besides which he drew liberally on the blended fervour and irony of Heine.

With all his wide study and attention to form, however, there is hardly a more original figure in lyric poetry than Fröding. This comes from his brilliant rendering both of the life about him and of his own peculiar character. After many years of experiment and revision, he published in 1891 his first volume, "Guitar and Accordion." It is in this book that Fröding most resembles Burns; its immediate and enduring popularity came from its possession of the same truth, humour, and sympathy that have endeared "Tam o' Shanter" and "The Jolly Beggars" to all classes of readers. But Sweden is a grimmer, wilder place than Scotland. Värmland in particular is famous for its high spirits, its fatalism, and its vivid superstition. To these Fröding added love of nature, lyric grace, and the firm control of a born dramatist. Without any toning down of the facts, Fröding humanized every figure on his stage, not even excepting the gruesome troll of Norse mythology. Like Burns he directed his wit against all shams, social or religious.

As his career progressed, Fröding turned from objective to subjective realism, the Heinesque phase of his character. But a more bitter note soon struck in, the note of des-

pair at genius foiled and wasted. Feeling his mind giving way, the poet nevertheless reaffirmed his ideals of beauty and faith in ultimate good, in poems that are among the most wonderful of their kind, equally notable for their unsparing self-revelation and for their wealth of imagination. One may prefer the sturdier type of genius, the Dantes and Miltons who could fight their way through adversity, but must one not also admire those who, despondent for themselves, never quite lost hold on their inspiration?

The rest of Fröding's life may be summed up very briefly. Within seven years, he published four more volumes, wherein the chief accent is one of despair mingled with ideal beauty and trust in the divine mercy. The poet's fine mentality and artistic sense prevent these from being as morbid as one might expect; but in 1898 he broke down completely. He was restored to comparative health in 1906, but never recovered his creative power. He spent his last years in religious study and meditation, dying in 1911.

It is a moot question whether the objective or the subjective side of Fröding's poetry is the more important. Probably, however, the popular verdict is right in preferring the former as exhibited in the wholly genial and healthy "Songs of Värmland." Yet the personal poems are equally arresting. The two phases are perhaps best united in "A Poor Monk of Skara," which sums up the poet's philosophy. There is, to be sure, a considerable range of other themes among Fröding's later poems. There are daring flights of sheer fancy, like "A Dream of the Orient," and exquisite bits of lyricism, like "Titania." The admirer of temperament, colour, and verbal magic will find Fröding wellnigh inexhaustible.

This brings us to the question of Fröding's style. As to the variety and flexibility of his prosody there can be no question. Neither free verse nor blank verse held any attraction for him. His peculiar gift is a dithyrambic effect secured by the free use of dactyls, anapæsts, and extra syllables, probably under the influence of Shelley. Fröding has been described without hyperbole as a marvellous metricalian, but his style is always the incarnation, not the decoration, of his thought.

In the preceding paragraphs an attempt has been made to show that Fröding was both a remarkable personality and a brilliant literary craftsman, qualities which may fairly be said to constitute a great poet. Certainly his popularity in Sweden among all classes should bear this out. As many as thirty thousand sets of his poems have been sold to a population of under six millions, which would seem to be something like a record. Such a poet should surely be better known in the English-speaking world, if only through the medium of a brief essay and a few English renderings of his verses.

CHARLES WHARTON STORK.

IN THE CLASSICAL CEMETERY.

IX. MOTHER AGAINST DAUGHTER.

THE intimacy of Euripides with the feminine soul is well revealed in his treatment of the feud between Clytemnestra and her daughter, Electra. Antagonism between mother and daughter is the most difficult of all dramatic themes. It works itself out as a rule in long, sullen, silent tragedies because it springs from a hopeless conflict of irreconcilable temperaments. The tragedy rises every now and then to a dramatic moment of which only a genius of the highest order, like Euripides, can make anything convincing. He reveals his art at its best in his treatment of the conflict between Electra and her mother. The daughter triumphed to the extent of achieving her mother's murder but the mother triumphed through the Furies who pursued the instrument of Electra's vengeance. Clytemnestra seems to come back from the grave in every Euripidean tragedy that concerns itself with the destinies of her strange children.

The origin of the conflict between Clytemnestra and the least lovable of her daughters is accounted for in the Euripidean tragedies through a careful study of the

characters of these women. Clytemnestra is a great lady, a woman of fashion, a mistress of the finest art of life. She will not step out of a chariot unless some ceremonial value attaches to the procedure. She is royal and imperial. She has style, magnificence and a "presence." No mortal can behold her without rushing to hold her train, to spread a carpet lest her feet be contaminated by contact with the unconsecrated earth. She is exquisitely groomed and pays infinite attention to the curling of her blonde hair. Her dignity is impeccable and infinite as is her condescension, but it gives not the least offence. Dickens might have caricatured so hopeless an aristocrat but he would have rendered her stiff and unconvincing in the manner of his Lady Dedlock. Thackeray might have "got" her but he would have missed the divinity of this child of Leda and the Spartan King. Her grandeur had nothing British and heavy about it. Balzac could conceive a Clytemnestra mistily, as his Duchesse de Maufrigneuse indicates, for there are certain resemblances. Clytemnestra, like the Duchesse, reigned over the world of fashion long and gloriously and she had the gift of the Duchesse for persuading a man that all the tales about her were but calumnies.

Granting all this, the fact remains that Euripides alone has left us a living and breathing Clytemnestra. The Clytemnestra of Æschylus stalks up and down in a highly ridiculous manner and, anyhow, in reading Æschylus, one has an uneasy suspicion that he is writing farce to look like tragedy. There are things in the "Prometheus Vincetus" to make a sensible person, who has not got his Greek through English texts by way of Germany, explode with laughter. Sophocles is more artistic when he rattles the skeleton in Clytemnestra's closet but he is as gloomy as Thomas Hardy without showing any of Hardy's relieving insight into the heart of woman. Euripides alone reads the secret of Clytemnestra's soul in the feud between herself and that terrible daughter of hers. The fires of hell consume the hearts of those two women.

Clytemnestra is a woman with a past; and her daughter never lets her forget it. Clytemnestra is always forgetting the past; but how vividly Electra remembers it! She is continually throwing it at her mother. Clytemnestra, to be sure, ought never to have married her second husband, for no better reason than that he had killed her first. The second husband had the great merit, in Electra's eyes, of being her Papa. When Papa went off to the war did Clytemnestra grieve? Not at all. She dressed her hair in its most becoming style and she received with every appearance of complacency the marked attentions of a man who did not treat her children at all well. By the time her Papa got home, Electra had lots to tell him. Clytemnestra, instigated by the man with whom she was now infatuated, killed Electra's Papa in his bath. Electra's little brother would have been killed next but Electra understood her mother too well to let the child remain in the house. He was packed off to the home of a gentleman who had married a sister of the murdered Papa.

No wonder Clytemnestra wanted to forget the past—from the standpoint of Greek tragedy, though, it was by no means such a terrible past—and, moreover, Clytemnestra belonged to a family that had, to use a popular expression, "got away with murder" before. But in this matter, Electra could not get her mother's point of view. "The past!" was Electra's refrain. "Forget it!" is the purport of Clytemnestra's answer. The daughter was, of course, at a terrible disadvantage in this feud with her mother. The older woman was a genius in the use of every wile of her sex. She knew men where they are weakest and she had a personality that enabled her to exploit that knowledge. Her sister, the beautiful Helen, might surpass the rest of her sex in the materialized and purely physical sorcery that hits the senses, but Clytemnestra possessed that more subtle sorcery which enslaves not merely through the desire of the flesh but through the desire of the eye and the pride of life. There was

an uncannily artistic and a bafflingly intellectual quality in Clytemnestra, a wickedness that somehow made her sister Helen look like a silly woman with a too pretty face who had run off to Troy with a shepherd much younger than herself. Helen was wonderful to look at but—well, wait until Clytemnestra began to talk! The wickedness of Helen had a familiar and almost trite effect upon the jaded ear in that too pagan world, but such magnificent sins as Clytemnestra contrived—what would that woman be up to next?

Thus does Euripides bring out the quality of his Clytemnestra's past. The slightest suggestion that she is about to make a fresh appearance—in some new capacity as murderess or adulteress, perhaps—arouses a natural and breathless interest. The whole neighbourhood, the whole army or the whole bevy of curious ladies will have that past of hers by heart—Electra has seen to that—and everybody rushes to see her step down. Her very first observation is greedily absorbed by every ear. Her genius is all for creating an effect of distinction. Clytemnestra is not only a public scandal but a fine spectacle, the greatest mistress of the art of living things down—and living them down consummately. She lives in sin but she does it with refined pomp and glorious circumstance. She makes no pretence whatever to virtue, for she is far too fascinating to need that quality in her world, and so she puts every enemy to confusion by revealing the unlooked for circumstance that she is after all nothing but a perfect lady. Clytemnestra never stoops to the cleverness of Becky Sharp and she is not tricky and deceitful in the style of a fine lady conceived by Balzac. Anyone following her through one Euripidean tragedy after another, whether she makes a personal appearance or is merely a topic of conversation, must understand why all her world lived in awe and admiration of Clytemnestra—with the one woeful exception of Electra.

Electra had to be turned out of the house at last. Like all people with but one idea, Electra bored everybody. She could think only of one thing—her mother's past. At home she might have prevailed over her mother if she had had her mother's distinction, her mother's wonderful comprehension of men, her mother's conversational powers; but a mean marriage was contrived for Electra and she went to live with the poor fellow. He let her severely alone; she was a wife in name only. She filled his head with the details of her mother's past until he too echoed the tale with all Electra's iteration and reiteration. Clytemnestra at last lost her patience. What a scene it is between mother and daughter, when at last they have it out! That past is boiled all together in the cauldron of Electra's wrath and is dashed into Clytemnestra's face. The vessel of the mother's indignation is likewise full and she empties it all upon the head of her child.

Thus Clytemnestra storms at Electra and thus Electra storms back at Clytemnestra. It is a scene that is enacted in every home when the mother has a past and the daughter is its victim. The daughter is invariably the victim in these situations. The son gets all the compassion; every allowance is made for him. What is to be expected of a young man with such a mother! But the daughter is abandoned to a dreary spinsterhood unless she has the grim determination of an Electra. That young lady had profited by her mother's example. Clytemnestra had murdered, so she must be murdered in her turn. Everything was now ready. Euripides, an artist in all things, is never so finely æsthetic as when he contrives a murder, and the "taking off" of Clytemnestra is his masterpiece in that line. The music of her shrieks rings out through the garden as she is despatched within doors by her son.

The grief of Clytemnestra's children when they have consummated their sacrifice comprises the supreme tribute to her personality. Until this moment she had been to them the murderess, the adulteress, the occasion of the exile of Orestes, the cause of the humiliation of Electra, the evil genius in the lives of husbands and

lovers. She was dead at last and the children who slew her remembered her origin, half celestial and altogether royal, remembered how Helen of Troy herself had seemed to be in eclipse when Clytemnestra shone radiantly. The grief of her children is held by some to be unnatural, but they who hold this view do not understand the real nature of a feud between mother and daughter. It is the most deadly of all feuds and, if it does not in our day reach its climax in murder, that is because murder is not the thing now. The divorce court has taken its place. Electra takes her seat in the witness chair to let the world know all about her father's wrongs. Clytemnestra, like all women who seek to bury the past, did not remember that her daughter would grow up.

What a horde of imitators Clytemnestra has in these modern days! She comes to life before our eyes in Paris, in New York, in London—especially and always at last in London. The parallel is sometimes so close that merely to mention it is to become almost offensively personal. There are the three husbands and there are the children by the different husbands. There is the vast wealth and there is the car. The effects achieved by Euripides with Clytemnestra's car render the parallel too vivid, until we remember that she knew how to step out of it with a distinction still to be learned by the Clytemnestras in New York or London. The Clytemnestras nowadays lack the "presence," the intellectuality and the knowledge of masculine human nature displayed by their original in Euripides, and they are not such native aristocrats. They strive to make up for their deficiencies by going in for social reform and by wearing very elegant hats, or by talking Christian Science with an accentuated English drawl, but they have not the gift of Clytemnestra for living down the past consummately, however large the majority by which they win a seat in some representative body or other. Clytemnestra, it is true, has the good luck to be "written up" by Æschylus, by Sophocles and by Euripides, but her imitator now is at the mercy of the newspaper reporters, who are without the modernity and the sensationalism of Greek tragedy. At any rate, the nearest thing we have nowadays to the Clytemnestra of Euripides is the heroine of a double-page "special" in the Sunday magazine section of a Hearst newspaper; but after all, yellow journalism is a sorry substitute for classical education.

ALEXANDER HARVEY.

MISCELLANY.

THE other day in an Elevated train a majestic young woman entered the car and sat down beside me: the rabbit's foot of winter had rouged the cheeks that bloomed under her little blue cap and in combination with her modish dress, her very short skirts, and the air of affable hauteur with which she directed the movements of the coloured nurse who accompanied her, she made a picture which I—hardened though I am to the wiles of four-year-old females—found it impossible to turn my eyes away from. The tantalizing flirt, after a single sidelong glance, disdained to take any notice of me, and before the train had left the station she settled herself down to the perusal of a little green primer she had selected from a satchel of books. The volume was one of those introductions to the written language which, as we look back on them, seem planned especially to dull the edge of childhood's joys: but as I followed my little neighbour through the pages of the book I realized that this adult reflection of mine was simply bathetic nonsense. The chief joy of childhood is growing up: it is only when one has become adult that one fancies that the glory of childhood consists in remaining innocently a child.

At four, one has the passions of a true philologist. One's ABC's have been learnt, and although there is still pleasure and amusement in alphabetic blocks, especially when one tries to make a skyscraper with twenty-six of them (and never succeeds), the indiscriminate, aimless use of letters begins to pall. Suddenly one makes a new

discovery. Letters, it appears, can be arranged in a certain fashion so that they will cease to be simple letters and will be combined into something quite wonderful, and vastly different—words. A word is the sort of thing that tumbles out of one's mouth when one says, "Good morning, Papa." In the book which one gets to study, which is called a p-r-i-m-e-r—whatever that may mean—one finds all sorts of delightful things that one says every day printed as words. Of course at first they are not easy to read. T-h-e is really a barbarous arrangement of letters and one doesn't see at first how just putting them alongside of one another can make that funny sound, "the." Still, grown-ups say this is what it does, and of course they know. What is even more strange is this, that every time one comes across t-h-e it hasn't changed a bit: it is still "the." In the beginning every word one sees is a new word—my little neighbour in the "El" seemed to think so at any rate. She would read aloud in an entranced way: The pretty dove eats the corn (her nurse giving her a lift over the "dove," which was the new word introduced in the lesson). Then she would go on to the next line: Ruth, feed the pretty—what was this? There was that funny letter "d" again, and a "v" and an "e" and an "o." Where did one ever see this before? It is still a novel and inexplicable word. "Nurse, what is it?" "That is dove; didn't you read it just now in that other sentence?" Oh, to be sure! How stupid of me. One must always watch this sort of thing in reading: one has to keep one's eyes open and one's wits alive: it is a tremendously exciting game. . . .

THEN, as I saw clearly, the little miss made a discovery: "Dove begins with the same letter it sounds like." Most of us have forgotten this significant fact, but she remembered that funny word "the," which is spelled tee-hee but pronounced "dthuh." Having caught onto this significant fact my neighbour became absorbed in the sentence as a structure of thought, for when one begins to read things aloud one finds that it can be done with all sorts of pleasant variations in emphasis, as for example: *Ruth*, feed the dove; *Ruth*, feed the *dove*; *Ruth*, feed the dove, and so on, with many more permutations and combinations as the sentences grow longer. Watching this radiant beauty in her first intoxication with literature, I found myself wondering cynically how long it would be before these intense, impersonal, spiritual adventures would cease to have their savour for her and would give way to a petty absorption in the development and exploitation of the physical beauty of which her quick grey eyes and chubby body already gave a healthy promise. But I detected in that cynicism the jealousy of a neglected admirer, and the pangs of a disappointed flirtation—and I turned back, with a compulsive frown, to the magazine which I had been reading.

No one can frequent our current exhibitions of art without realizing what a limited number of æsthetic experiences serves the conventional painter. It is by the restriction of his personal reactions, rather than by the practice of æsthetic selection, that he achieves success in his craft. After a trifling period of experiment, he finds the type of landscape, the model, the decorations, the colour-effects, that conform most affably to his talents, and he confines his æsthetic responses to the small group of objects in which the desired visual patterns are to be found. When the popular artist experiments at all, after having found his groove, he gets no farther than his brush or his medium: with an integrity that is wholly admirable in a man committed to the support of his family and the preservation of the social decencies, he scrupulously refrains from experimenting with himself. Far be it from the conventional painter to mar the exquisite adaptation of his mind to his art, and his art to the public that patronizes it! Tranquil in this perfect adjustment, he attains the peace that passeth understanding. Peace—and plenty!

IN the restriction and fixation of his experience it is inevitable that the popular painter should concentrate upon outward things: any internal transmutation of æsthetic stimuli would prevent the spectator from recognizing forthwith the objects which were being presented for contemplation and would *ipso facto* prevent the artist from being a popular painter. Except for slight changes in colour-emphasis or arrangement, the work of the conventional artist does not differ essentially from that of the photographer or the sign-painter. No intensity of æsthetic experience, apparently, is necessary to enable him to reproduce with taste and charm the objects that lie before him, be they a platter of cod-fish, a fleet of fishing-boats, or a formation of rocks. It is for this reason that the popular painter is inclined to look with harsh suspicion upon the groups that have divorced themselves from the patent criteria of good drawing, sensitive colouring, correct perspective, and so forth. His experience is forthright, limited, and naïve. An æsthetic world, projected through the screen of that experience, would be the same as if it were projected through plate-glass: it would not be warped or muddled or inflamed or sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. It is no wonder then that he is sceptical of the modernist's ability as an artist, for he is unable to conceive that æsthetic experience can be other than the simple and directly transmissible kind. He is puzzled by the cubist or abstractionist doctrine because he has never—he thanks heaven, never!—lived the life. He attributes to poverty in art what is really an exuberant richness in experience.

BUT if we quarrel with the conventional painter for limiting himself to the æsthetic superficies, it does not follow that the insurgent schools are themselves altogether without fault. It should be obvious that there are certain moods of æsthetic ecstasy which lose their quality by being converted into the algebra of Picasso or the geometry of Matisse, and it is only in the flush of innovation that one may pardonably look upon these moods as unfit for crystallization through the medium of paint. The modernist schools are all to the good in so far as they have widened the range of design and demanded from the artist more authentic inner responses: but no school, no method, no doctrine, no technique is an end in itself. The painter whose capacity for experience increases will not merely grow through the schools but out of them. The doctrines of insurgency may steer him through an emotional crisis; but a revolution whose methods are prolonged after the necessary over-turn of the powers-that-be is as much in danger of lapsing into a stale convention as the very order that it succeeded. Fixation of experience is the enemy of life, and of all the arts that spring from life. Our demand is that the artist should maintain his capacity for adaptation and growth. It would be easy enough to get a living art if once we could ensure the existence of living men.

JOURNEYMAN.

POETRY.

THE CURLEW.

Curlew, curlew, why do you cry so?
Weak and mournful through turf-laden darkness,
Like a keener's keen, your voice comes to me.

Ah, bird of darkness, cease your crying.
You bring to my mind the stricken Mother.

You bring to my mind the Mother's sons—
Red Hugh and saffron-girt O'Neill,
Patrick of Lucan, Robert Emmet,
The brave Kerryman, my friend,
And Patrick Pearse and Roger Casement.

You bring to my mind their white, dead sword-hands.
Their blue, dead eyelids,
Swathed in the grey of the Mother's shawl.

Curlew, curlew, cease your crying.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL.

THE THEATRE.

DEBURAU, AND THE GUITRYS.

IN the year 1839, in front of the little theatre called *Funambules*, in Paris, stands the "barker" beating a big drum and proclaiming the super-superlative superiority of one Deburau in the rôle of Pierrot in the pantomime entitled "Old Clo'"; in the year 1844 the same "barker" is at the same job in the same place in celebration of a Pierrot of the same name in the same piece. But the first Deburau is not the second. The one is Jean-Gaspard and the other is Charles. They are father and son; in which fact lie the pith and essence of Sacha Guitry's play as translated into English rhyme by Mr. Granville Barker and recently put upon the stage at the Belasco Theatre in New York.

Sacha Guitry is not among the greatest of playwrights or of actors, but whether it is in his written or in his spoken word, there is about him the very finest Gallic perfume, a delicacy and subtlety of head and heart that have long made it worth while for Paris to go to the *Porte Saint Martin*. There Guitry *père* and Guitry *fils* combine with a captivating Yvonne Printemps to present the work of the younger man and to achieve a performance unique in France and probably in the world. When Sacha is sick abed, he writes a witty book about himself and his doctor and his visitors, and makes his printer imitate his handwriting so as to be rid of the dull printed letter. When he is well he edits a magazine and scribbles plays by day which he performs by night. He is irrepressible and he is *spirituel*; he is of Paris Parisian and therefore beloved of its citizens. But if they love the son, Sacha, it is the father, Lucien, they admire.

At the *Porte Saint Martin* they take it for granted that when Sacha grows old (in the years of the stage) he shall turn into Lucien, the lesser yielding to the greater light. Sacha knows that well enough and that is why he has become the writer *par excellence* of the two-generation play, or rather, perhaps, it should be called the three-generation play, for when Sacha disappears in Lucien he preserves his existence in the grown-up body of what was in the first act his own little son. For which Paris is thankful, for it does not like Lucien so well as to dispense too soon with Sacha. Yet it is when Lucien picks up the rôle of Sacha, as in "*Mon Père Avait Raison*" or "*Deburau*,"—the rôle in its 'fifties or 'sixties upon which the curtain rose in its 'twenties or 'thirties—that it becomes infused with a vitality, coloured with a variety, stamped with a clarity impossible to forget. Now choleric, now benign, indignant or pitiful, defiant of age yet radiant with it, ranging through all the moods from love to hate and back again, dispensing in richest tones of irony or pathos an ever lively commentary upon life—in such wise do I remember Lucien and store him away among my most precious memories of Paris.

But while I am thus talking, the "barker" has finished beating his drum and the crowd has passed through the little doors into the theatre. By grace of the scene-shifter we all go in too, to behold a comfortable, chatty audience of the last mid-century, which implies crinolines and curtsies, rakish stove-pipe hats, tail-coats and tight trousers strapped beneath the heel; all multi-coloured and far from undistinguished, for in the scene are Hugo, de Musset, Sand, Chopin, Gautier and Dumas, besides the great Duplessis, of whom more later. Lights out, and, the scene-shifter having done his

work again, behold Pierrot facing the ghost of the murdered old clo' man, murdered that Columbine might have his wealth, and Pierrot plunging the knife into his own bosom in terror and remorse, to expire finally in the arms of Columbine. Then back to the auditorium, which is loud in praise of Pierrot as it scatters, homeward-bound, leaving behind it the members of the company, gossiping, back-biting, proud and yet jealous of Deburau, the adored of women but still the adorer of his wife—until there enters the lovely Duplessis, alas, come to pay her tribute and lead him away with her as the curtain falls. That is the beginning of all the trouble, for Duplessis is not only beautiful but young, and there is a rich young fellow who must needs steal her heart away from Deburau, who thus comes to lose both wife and mistress and is left alone with his little son, his dog and his canary in its cage.

After that, Sacha Guitry, mindful ever of his generations, makes seven years to pass, so that he may enter into the skin of the boy, grow to manhood now, and transfer his old rôle to Lucien, grown old and sick and neglected of the public. Housed in a garret, he still cherishes the memory of Marie Duplessis and makes believe that every ring of the doorbell must mean her return. She comes indeed, but for pity's sake, not love's. She has heard of his illness and brings her doctor. Disillusion again for Deburau, in the midst of which the doctor, kept ignorant of the name of his patient that Duplessis's reputation may not suffer, is heard advising distraction, the theatre, a good act by a good actor, *enfin* something like "Old Clo'" as played at the *Funambules*. When the physician is gone, the old Deburau begins to stir again, helped by the questioning of his son who is yearning to be an actor too. Who, then, is this man playing Pierrot in "Old Clo'"? It is Le Grand, says Charles. Le Grand the miserable! He shall not play it! Deburau shall for this night at least—and out goes old Deburau to the *Funambules* once again.

It is the old theatre, but this time we see it from the wings. We see Deburau slay the old clo' man, but when Deburau tries to drag the body away, he stumbles and falls. The curtain falls hastily, the audience disperses silently. Deburau is finished. The manager is disgusted, the company aghast, even the curtain refuses to rise by some odd chance. But then it is that Deburau bethinks him of his son. Under the skilful hands of his father Charles is dressed in the quaint white clothes of Pierrot, painted to match, coached in all the lore of the veteran actor, put through the part there and then. Out goes the "barker" to proclaim the super-superlative superiority of Deburau the new over Deburau the old. Just as the curtain of the *Funambules* goes up for the next performance, the curtain of the Belasco goes down, leaving, however, on the nearer side Jean-Gaspard watching Charles through the gap in the middle.

One could not but think of Sacha's Deburau telling the story of his life in the auditorium of the *Funambules* to the obsequious reporter; or raging in Duplessis's apartment against the fortune-teller who predicted trouble; or, again, surprising his mistress in the arms of her new lover and pardoning her as he bade her farewell; or, finally, following out the instructions of his father in practising the rôle of Pierrot. One could not but think of Lucien's Deburau arguing sardonically against his son's en-

thusiasm for the theatre, or defying his age and his ills and striding bravely out of his attic to take up his old part once more, or expatiating on the qualifications of the true actor—on the necessity that Love go with Art and Art with Love to make life worth while.

In Mr. Lionel Atwell there is a more than usually gifted and polished player upon whom the whole play depends and depends successfully, and he is ably seconded by Mr. Morgan Farley, who enters into his task with a most engaging and ingenuous enthusiasm. Both follow Deburau's rule and think themselves well into their parts. Of Mr. Atwell's, one might say that he would have passed muster even with a *Porte-Saint-Martin* audience. But among the minor characters, it has to be confessed, there are some upon whom the *Porte Saint Martin* would certainly shut its doors. Why is it that neither New York nor London ever obtains that excellence in *all* the rôles that Paris insists upon? It seems that our stage-managers are obstinate in believing that one large virtue will cover a multitude of little sins. At the *Belasco*, at any rate, there shelter not a few petty sinners, especially feminine ones, beneath the wing of Mr. Atwill. Perhaps a people gets the histrionic no less than the political players it deserves. Our political players are clumsy enough, especially the rank and file, as witness City Hall or the Capitol. Or is the trouble that we do not follow Deburau in uniting the art of love with the love of art?

CHARLES R. HARGROVE.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS.

REVIEWING THE REVIEWER.

SIRS: After reading and re-reading "A Reviewer's Note-Book" in your issue of 24 November I have to confess that I can make little of it. Yet I am willing to concede that, pervading an essay wherein there are several indubitable truths clothed in precise and sprightly speech, there may be an intelligible (even a sound) idea which has so far escaped me. So, indeed, I write not to crack the knout of stricture but to beg the alms of elucidation.

The Note-Book dealt, you may remember, with Mr. H. L. Mencken's vigorous essay on our national letters in his volume of "Prejudices: Second Series." The Reviewer found Mr. Mencken to be kind-hearted but misguided; instead of attending to the sole function of the critic (which is to look after "the welfare of literature itself") Mr. Mencken, so the Reviewer complains, is encouraging in American writers a complacency which bodes them no good. Moreover, Mr. Mencken is wrong, says the Reviewer, in his initial assumption that America fails to appreciate its artists. The truth is, according to the Reviewer, that America appreciates the artist as much as he deserves, but it fails to "nourish" him.

It is here that I fall afoul of the vague terminology of the Reviewer in this, to me, remarkable essay of his; it is here that I begin uncomfortably to suspect that the Reviewer is enunciating a critical dictum which I should hate to see go unchallenged.

Just what, precisely, does the Reviewer mean by the following?:

While America fails to nourish the writer, it appreciates the writer, on the whole, if he has been able, in spite of all, to make something of himself, almost, if not quite, in the measure of his deserts.

After some deliberation over the numerous commas, I hazard this translation of the sentence: "While America fails to nourish the writer, it appreciates him almost (if not quite) as much as he deserves, provided he has been able to make something of himself."

The import of the apodosis I reserve for serious doubt; but here, at least, we have a prose sentence conveying an idea which is subject to scrutiny. What does the Reviewer mean by "nourish," and what does he mean when he says "make something of himself"? If by "nourish" he means that America fails to supply the writer with the spiritual

and intellectual materials for creative effort, the argument is nullified by the obvious fact that the artist creates his own intellectual and spiritual materials. If he means by "nourish" that America is antagonistic to the artist, he is arguing not against Mr. Mencken but with him. I shudder to suggest that by "nourish," the Reviewer means "provide a paying market for the artist's wares," for the Reviewer has well stated that "It is impossible to engage in two struggles at once, and the real artist is so busy struggling with himself that he has no time to think of anything else." It is manifestly unimportant to the real artist whether his wares sell or not: he is under an inner compulsion to express himself. Yet farther on, the impression deepens that it is perhaps material nourishment after all which the Reviewer has in mind. For we brush against this pronouncement:

How much do the European novelists who are always conquering this country concede to Puritanism? They ride over Puritanism as if it had no existence, yet they find a welcome here. And while some of them, no doubt, owe their vogue to a previous vogue in London or Paris, there are just as many who have no handicap over our native writers at all. One thinks, for example, of Johan Bojer, Martin Anderson Nexö, Louis Couperus: what intrinsic aid have these novelists had that our novelists lack? Is it to be supposed, then, that against its own novelists this country has a special embargo, this country which, to a dozen of its poets, has given its fullest support? That is hardly a plausible contention. . . . It is Messrs. Dreiser and Cabell chiefly, in Mr. Mencken's eyes, whom this country fails to appreciate. . . . If they were taken out into the open, if they were scrutinized in the white light of cosmopolitan criticism, if they were stood up side by side with the world's novelists of their generation—but the mere thought of such a thing is too unkind. . . . It is only fair to assume that if so many unaccredited European novelists succeed with the public where Messrs. Dreiser and Cabell fail, it is partly because they are superior artists and have something more vital to say to humanity.

This is so amazing a woof of fallacies that it is necessary to unravel them one by one.

I. Of the three foreign novelists the Reviewer mentions only one, I think, John Bojer, has found what may, even by hyperbole, be termed a "welcome," and I, for one, should never think of ranking him with Messrs. Cabell, Dreiser, Hergesheimer, Sherwood Anderson, Miss Willa Cather, or even with Mr. Sinclair Lewis. Moreover, Bojer's "welcome" was carefully prepared by an extensive advertising campaign following close on the heels of a "boost" by Mr. John Galsworthy. To appreciate this fact one has but to recall that the novel which is undoubtedly Bojer's best achievement, "The Power of a Lie," has remained unnoticed for years on Mr. Mitchell Kennerley's list. The advertising campaign took effect with "The Face of the World" precisely because that novel embodied all the popular American notions of what a novel should be. Nexö is known only to a small number of American readers, to the majority of whom he appeals for other than artistic reasons. Couperus, for all the encomiums of the critics and despite a lively advertising campaign, remains comparatively unread. Furthermore he (or his translator) has assuredly not ridden over Puritanism as if it did not exist: he is expurgated and his franker books are left untranslated.

2. It is not only a plausible but a verifiable contention that the American reading public has, in effect, an embargo against its own novelists. That is a phenomenon that has been commented upon by several critics. In the issue of the *Mercure de France* for 15 January, 1920, you will find the contention set forth at length, with the added observation that American critics and readers will accept an attitude of a European novelist towards European life which they will not tolerate in an American novelist towards American life.

3. Who are the dozen American poets to whom the country has given its "fullest support"?

4. Who are the world novelists of our generation whom it would be too unkind to mention in the same paragraph with Messrs. Dreiser and Cabell? Surely not the three novelists the Reviewer has already mentioned: I am not ashamed to mention even a half-dozen lesser American novelists in such company.

5. Does the Reviewer wish to go on record as believing that "it is only fair to assume that if so many unaccredited European novelists succeed with the public where Messrs. Dreiser and Cabell fail, it is partly because they are superior artists and have something more vital to say to humanity"? If he does, then let us have no more talk about ideals and let the Reviewer himself close up shop.

After this tussle with the Reviewer's text I arrive at these conclusions: that the Reviewer has read only one book by Mr. Cabell and he doesn't like it; and that he doesn't like Mr. Dreiser's work on any account. This, of course, is perfectly allowable, but the reasons he adduces are, critically speaking, emphatically not allowable. Thus, he says

that "no writer in the modern world is entitled to go through life as benighted as he [Dreiser]." I do not know exactly what the Reviewer means by "benighted," but I am sure that it has nothing to do with Dreiser's importance as a novelist of the tremendous welter of American life in the industrial age. About Mr. Cabell the Reviewer writes, "The stagnant gentility of the typical Southerner is written all over his work." Granting this to be true (which I certainly do not), wherein is this a devastating criticism? Even stagnant gentility has its place in literary art, if only as expressing perfectly a phase of life or an attitude towards life. That brilliant Catholic, the late Thomas Kettle, once wrote an admirable essay, the substance of which was condensed in the title, "The Fatigue of Anatole France," but he was careful to attest to the singular charm, the enduring beauty of that fatigue. That is the sort of catholicity (in the broader sense) which America stands most in need of from its critics to-day. It is idle to urge—as the Reviewer suggests that Mr. Mencken and his confrères should urge—Messrs. Cabell and Dreiser to become finer artists than they are; for however far short they may fall of the Reviewer's demands, one thing is sure and that is that both these men are producing the very best of which they are capable. To suggest that they become Nexös and Bojers is futile, and to me rather impertinent.

Finally, it is Mr. Mencken who is pleading for the recognition of these men, not these men themselves who, as the Reviewer says, "demand recognition." They are humanly pleased when some one says a good word for them; but I can say confidently that it is a matter of no immediate importance to either of these writers whether or not his work is appreciated. The difference, indeed, has been salutary: for fourteen years Mr. Cabell wrote practically without an audience, and this, as he confessed in "The Cream of the Jest" conduced to an edifying frankness. The hostility to Mr. Dreiser increased his dogged determination to be Dreiser and not Bojer or Nexö or, indeed, anybody else. I am, etc.,
Seminole, Okla.

BURTON RASCOE.

THE WAY TO INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM.

SIRS: In the *Freeman* of 5 January Miss Sylvia Kopald, in her appreciation of Daniel De Leon, states that I, among other radicals, am now actively engaged in following De Leon's policy of achieving industrial unionism by building organizations outside of and in opposition to the old trade unions.

The American Federation of Labour [says Miss Kopald] in his [De Leon's] view, was wrong, structurally and functionally, and moreover was controlled by a powerful machine. Only a rival organization could be strong enough to break it. It is interesting to note that Mr. William Z. Foster after his steel-strike experience last year, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and other labour-radicals are putting this view into operation.

This, may I point out, is exactly the reverse of the case. I consider such a secessionist programme as primarily responsible for the glaring weakness of the labour-movement. By pulling the militant revolutionists out of the trade unions, it at once robs those bodies of precious help, and condemns the radical movement to a sterile isolation. I am most decidedly opposed to this destructive policy; for which more than any other man De Leon was responsible. I look for and am working towards the realization of industrial unionism through the evolution of the trade unions. I am, etc.,
Chicago, Illinois.

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER.

THE CASE FOR BIRTH-CONTROL.

SIRS: In your issue of 29 December Mr. Herbert J. Foster writes you about birth-control. The point he makes, that motherhood should not be voluntary, because childhood can not also be voluntary, strikes me as decidedly futile, but harping on that subject, he continues that: "the child perhaps would choose not to be born"; and in that sentence pronounces one of the best reasons for the movement he opposes. It is quite certain that the many undesired children, and the many undesirable adults that develop from them, would much prefer never to have been born. Also almshouses, penitentiaries, and lunatic asylums would not then be quite so well filled.

Your correspondent's other objection, that birth-control, if not connected with "social vision, even religious vision" will merely play into the hands of "the frivolous, the vicious, and the ruthless" is another point in favour of birth-control, for surely it will be better for all concerned, if those frivolous, vicious, and ruthless men and women do not become fathers and mothers. The average healthy, natural young people will

continue to wish for children, and have them, and give them their due—there is no cause for worry here.

Lastly—why does Mr. Foster drag in the old fetish of "the good of the whole"? It seem to me that this phrase has become nothing more than an empty slogan with those reformers who want to make the individual as uncomfortable and as much hampered as possible. The good of the individual is the important part. Give every individual as much freedom and enlightenment as possible—there is not so very much of these things available, even at best—and "the whole" will take care of itself. I am, etc.,
Yonkers, New York.

HELEN WOLJESKA.

AN APT QUOTATION.

SIRS: I take the liberty of asking the *Freeman* to call upon the Government of His Gracious Majesty King George V and its enthusiastic and indifferent supporters, to give a moment's reflection between meals to a paragraph and a half found in Volume 1, Chap. 6 of an English writer, who had ambition enough at the end of the eighteenth century to ponder upon such a peculiar subject as political justice. Says Godwin:

There is no state of mankind that renders them incapable of the exercise of reason. There is no period in which it is necessary to hold the human species in a condition of pupillage. If there were, it would seem but reasonable that their superintendents and guardians, as in the case of infants, of another sort, should provide for the means of their subsistence without calling upon them for the exertions of their own understanding. Wherever men are competent to look the first duties of humanity in the face, and to provide for their defence against the invasions of hunger and the inclemencies of the sky, it can scarcely be thought that they are not equally capable of every other exertion that may be essential to their security and welfare.

The real enemies of liberty in any country are not the people, but those higher orders who find their imaginary profit in a contrary system. . . . The error lies, not in tolerating the worst forms of government for a time, but in supposing a change impracticable, and not incessantly looking forward to its accomplishment.

I am, etc.,

D. G.

THE RE-EDITING OF SHAKESPEARE.

SIRS: May I make two corrections in my article on "The Re-editing of Shakespeare" in your issue of 12 January?

Somewhere between my brain and your printed page the name of Mr. T. S. Omond became changed to Ormond. (By the way, Mr. Omond's book to which I referred is published by the de la More Press of London.)

The line which I quoted to illustrate the impracticability of Mr. Bayfield's system of scansion should have been marked thus:

That my / keen / knife— / see not the / wound it / makes.

—the point being that such a reading, giving an equal time value to each of the above five divisions, distorts the rhythm. Of course the ordinary scansion is only approximate. I am, etc.,
Chicago, Illinois.

LLEWELLYN JONES.

IN DEFENCE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION.

SIRS: In your issue of 5 January, 1921, you have a splendid editorial anent "The Penalty of Office-Holding." However, there is one fact, surely not to be overlooked by one who sees its importance so clearly, to which I must sincerely take exception. As a specific instance characterizing the "abominable dualism" obtaining among officeholders and official bodies, you state "that members of the American Legion here and there are to-day interfering with the collection of funds for the starving babies of Central Europe." Such a statement, with its purposeful tact and the evident meaning it is supposed to convey, is sweeping enough, but when it is intended to prove most forcibly a point in fact, no one but those who specialize in vague ideas will allow himself this expensive pleasure. I still remember how one of my history professors at college used to indulge in generalizations. He was particularly fond of supplementing his every lecture with this simple truth: "All generalizations are false, including this one."

In the matter of viewing and dissecting world-problems to their very root, the American Legion may not be as fundamentally "radical" as is no doubt the *Freeman*. But wherever elemental courtesy is involved; wherever it is a simple question of extending a helping hand to the starving babies of Central Europe and the Near East, there is not the slightest doubt that the American Legion, whether it acts through its national, state or local agencies, knows where it stands. I do not know, and as yet have to hear of, a single specific case, where the American Legion maliciously interfered or tried to interfere with the collection of funds for the starving babies of Central Europe. On the contrary, wherever you

go, you find that throughout this country the Legion, together with its Auxiliary organization, is furthering and intensifying the cause of Relief. In my own home town, where the local post has a strong membership, this mutual getting-together and discussing intelligently the question of the importance to the world's peace and stability of having a living and healthy Europe, sounds like common sense. I believe this very same spirit of simple and just kindness permeates every local post of the organization.

I hold no brief for the American Legion as a national organization. It, too, has its characteristic faults. Yet it is very important to emphasize this vital point: that in the matter of immediate aid to the starving babies of Central Europe there exists no "official mind" for the Legion, as you so painstakingly try to suggest, but rather a spontaneous flow of effort to give, coming directly from each and every individual composing the organization, manifests itself most abundantly and humanely. Surely the *Freeman* does not suspect that in any particular instance the members of the American Legion, no matter how boorishly some of them may have acted at different times, do not possess a fair measure of "human sweetness," especially when the salvation of millions of starving children is uppermost in the minds of the simplest and—the toughest. I am, etc.,
Hurley, So. Dak. ISADORE BERKOWITZ.

We brought no charge against the Legion, and carefully exonerated from blame even the individual members whom we mentioned. Our readers will be glad to hear of the official activities referred to in this letter, and on that account we publish it.—EDITORS.

BOOKS.

WHERE THERE IS NOTHING.

When the admired Sir James Matthew, then plain Mr. Barrie, published "Tommy and Grizel," it is said that he received dozens of letters from quite dissimilar friends, complaining bitterly that he had drawn the character of his deplorable hero directly from theirs. I was reminded of this story in reading the review of M. Georges Duhamel's first long novel by M. Pierre Scize, the dramatic critic of *Bonsoir*, who stole a march on his colleague, the book-reviewer, simply because he was irresistibly driven to it by admiration. "When I had finished 'La Confession de Minuit,' I felt myself confusedly in the presence of a masterpiece. Nevertheless, mingled with this impression, was the feeling that perhaps this novel pleased me supremely because I found myself on almost every page of it." So he tried the experiment of lending it to a friend, a man at the opposite pole, temperamentally, from himself, a great sportsman, an amateur of cinemas and horse-races, and a devourer of the sort of literature which best suits these avocations. Three days later the friend brought back the book.

"*Epatant!*" he said. "One would imagine that this Duhamel knew me like a brother."

What then is this remarkable story held up like a mirror before one's conscience? For once, I am going to violate the most elementary rule of literary politeness; I am going to recount the "plot," such as it is, for the plot is as secondary to the real importance of this novel as that of the Book of Job.

Salavin is a poor man, but not an interesting poor man, not one of those picturesque workmen who abound in revolutionary fiction. He is a stool-pigeon, a little clerk out of a job, a martyr to society, but, to use a phrase of Léon Cladel, "a ridiculous martyr." Every morning at 7.30, he leaves the *pays Mouffetard*, the labyrinth of old dim streets behind the Pantheon, and crossing the Pont d'Austerlitz, a place he loved well because he had never been chagrined or unhappy there, he plunges

into the city, and arrives at the office by eight sharp. There are two hours for lunch, provided by his mother, a seamstress with a little income, who is a miracle of gentleness and moral tact, and then, in the evening, he is so mortally tired with the accumulated pettiness of the day, that after some moments of futile practice with the flute, that lamentable instrument of derelicts and idlers, there is nothing to do but yawn dismally and get under the covers as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, under the hopeless mediocrity of this life, exists, potentially, a fertile and even diseased imagination, kept in control only by the slavery of daily habits and hard work, "the long littleness of life." It is a modest little soul, so habitually swept and garnished by the monotony of its days that, hitherto, neither devils nor dreams have been able to enter in.

Then one day, as a result of an infinitely ridiculous misadventure, he loses his place. The description of the idiotic event which causes his fall is of a fine and penetrating psychology, but if I recounted it simply, as it happened, you might put me down as mad, and the author as well. In this initial absurdity, M. Duhamel has evoked all the absurd and sinister impulses which the most normal among us experience in their subconscious selves, impulses which leap like fantastic monsters from the ocean of unreason which plays all about the frail, the none too stable human spirit.

When Salavin finds himself in the street, he goes home, full of apprehension, to face his mother. But the latter reassures him. "That is all right, Louis," she says. "You will find another position presently, you may be sure of that. Take your time, my little one." And in fact he takes his time. The first afternoon of novel freedom wears away in a rich dream of violent and unaccustomed happiness, spent in his bedroom, "where he always reads lying down, in order to forget as much as possible his own body, where he smoked the cold ends of cigarettes because he preferred them to fresh ones."

But succeeding afternoons slip by like sweetmeats to which one returns too often, and each day he is a little less happy than the day before. Gradually his life becomes stagnant and meaningless. He is like a piece of driftwood in a warm current of horrible and delicious lassitude, a victim to the disease which Jules Payot has described in his "Education of the Will." It is a malady which sterilizes, morally, a larger proportion of humanity than one would like to believe. And as each futile, wretched, drab-coloured day slips by, full of mean thoughts, undirected desires and stagnant emotions, he plunges deeper into an abyss of self-contempt and self-distrust. He goes through all the silly and damnable experiences to which a certain part of our being submits when we are, momentarily, without an end; making a point of stepping exactly on the interstice between each paving-stone while walking; imagining the curb a tight-rope to traverse without slipping off into the gutter; and performing all these unhappy futilities solemnly, as if his life depended on it. Sometimes he wastes whole days in writing unimportant letters, accomplishing everything but the essential, for ever putting off the evil hour of action. Then he makes a pretence of looking for work, studies the newspapers and billboards, hoping all the time that they will contain nothing to interest him. In the end, he convinces himself that it is impossible to find a place—and this solution is exactly the one that he desires.

¹"Confession de Minuit." By Georges Duhamel. Paris: *Mercur de France*.

All this, so commonplace and so tremendously moving, so sordid and so poignant, so vibrant with external realism and spiritual verity, he lays bare to the silent listener, so that we stand overwhelmed with admiration before the author's beautiful skill and his divine humanity held up like a lamp over the dark corners of this sick-room.

Then the colours of the book darken and grow sombre, but there is still no external action; the obscure drama takes place wholly in the mind, or whatever it is that the learned decide to call that darkling region where the conscious and sub-conscious wills "ignorantly clash."

In tragic life, God wot,
No villain need be; passions spin the plot;
We are betrayed by what is false within.

Salavin is visited, violated by a whole swarm of uninvited thoughts over which he has no control. One evening in mid-October, "when there fell one of those rains which can not be said to fall, but which rather emanate from the sickly air, and the soil, and from man himself," he imagines a moment that his mother lies dead at home. His next thought is of the little income. His mother dead, and he would be twice as well off as before; he would be really comfortable. Who can say where the mere thought ends and the desire begins? Horror-struck, he hurries home, and finds his mother sewing in the lamplight to repair the hole in their resources made by his idleness. She says, smiling at him tranquilly:

"Je suis contente: nous avons bien travaillé."

A young girl loves him and he returns her love in one of those moments when the clouds seem to open, bringing the happy spring. "Attention," he says to himself, "the new life is going to begin." Almost in the same day, he violates in thought the young wife of his best friend, the only friend whom he loves sincerely. When his mother timidly proposes marriage as a solution for his poor, unanchored, tormented existence, which she dimly divines, the wreck of his self-confidence has foundered so far that he dares not put his hand on his happiness. It would demand an effort of will, the one thing impossible for him. "Monsieur," he says at the close of the narrative, in the little deserted bar, as the clocks strike midnight and yet another day begins: "You have an air simple and good; you have listened to me with so much benevolence; perhaps you will tell me what I ought to do. . . ." "Dostoevsky! Gorky!" the reader will perhaps murmur reminiscently. "These Russians with their embarrassing pathos, their sterile pity, have brought into fashion these midnight confessions of poor devils, obscure and sordid dreamers, washed up in all their spiritual nakedness from the circumambient eddies of industrial life in great towns. M. Duhamel, a psychologist and physician, has chosen to present an abnormal type, a mutilated soul, in the same able and tender fashion as formerly, in the trenches, he treated the extremely bad cases, the backwash of war. Only it is a little depressing for the rest of us who, as anybody can see, are whole and sound of mind, and masters of our fate. For we belong to the blood of the gods, we others, and we prefer, with reason, to read, and even write, the novels of heroic romanticism which conduct the author all the way around the Malay Peninsula, and land him in the Pactolus of ten editions. Your hero, my good doctor, is an exception, a caricature, and your book unwholesome. You meant well, but don't do

it again. You have only to see what that sort of thing has done to Russia."

For we, God knows, have never counted the paving-stones and walked on the curb; we have never gone to bed at the end of yet another useless day, yawning, "To-morrow the new life is going to begin," or sat dull-eyed in somnolent cafés before untouched poisons,

Musing upon the little lives of men,
And how they mar that little . . .

CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

SOME MODERN VIEWS OF JESUS.

MR. BERNARD SHAW in his preface to "Androcles" tells us that he sees no way out of the world's misery save that which would have been found by Jesus had he undertaken the work of a modern practical statesman; and in that regard at least a good many other people seem to be of Mr. Shaw's way of thinking, for the name of Jesus is being heard nowadays in some very unexpected places. Politicians (*mirabile dictu!*) have been heard to quote him; and great statesmen have been known to allude to him. One may take leave to suspect, however, that these gentlemen do not know what manner of fire they are playing with. Thoreau, speaking of certain sayings of Jesus, once said that "if but one of these sentences were rightly read from any pulpit in the land, there would not be left one stone of that meeting-house standing on another."

How much do we really know about Jesus? We ought to-day to be in a much better position to answer that question than has been the case for many centuries. Certain matters appear to be firmly established. The mythus-theory has not been heard from since it received its quietus at the efficient hands of Mr. F. C. Conybeare, and it is almost certain that what is known as the "Synoptic Problem" has been solved. An actual person, Jesus, there certainly was; but have we adequate and authentic material for a reconstruction of him?

Here are three volumes which essay, each in its own way, an answer to this question. Professors Jenks and Kent in "Jesus's Principles of Living" appear to have no doubts on the subject. They labour conscientiously to expound the teaching of Jesus over against the life of to-day. The book has a distinct flavour of modernity, arising from the frequent use of such terms as the State, citizenship, socialism and the like, but there is no suggestion that a critical problem exists; nor any evidence to show that the writers have applied the tests of authenticity which certainly should be applied to large tracts of the Gospels. But the chief criticism which the book invites is that it sets one wondering why Jesus was ever put to death. According to this account of it, his teaching was so inoffensive that it is incredible that any one should have raised the slightest objection to it. In a word, this book is a laborious piece of work, which leaves us pretty much where we were.

We pass into an entirely different atmosphere when we open "The Beginnings of Christianity,"² by Professors Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake. An extraordinary courage and an incredible equipment of scholarship are required for so arduous an undertaking, for this volume is but the first instalment of three in the first part of the programme. Fortunately, neither the courage nor the scholarship is lacking to either of the editors, and even if we are compelled to differ from some of their conclusions, we can not and ought not to withhold from them our gratitude for the vast service which even in this preliminary volume they have rendered New Testament students. Here we have a repertory, as complete as may be, of the relevant information concerning the background of history and religion against which Christianity first took shape; and a compact collection of the data that belongs

¹ "Jesus's Principles of Living." Charles F. Kent and Jeremiah W. Jenks. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

² "The Beginnings of Christianity." F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake. Vol. I. New York: The Macmillan Co.

to the general critical problems that surround the story of Christian origins. The general thesis of the work is that the preaching of repentance and of the Kingdom of God begun by Jesus passed into the sacramental cult of the Lord Jesus Christ. The problem that the editors set before themselves is how this transition came about. In search of a solution they turn to the Book of Acts, the only record we have of the beginnings of Christianity. But before the Book of Acts can be made to yield up its meaning, it is necessary to fill in its historical and religious backgrounds, and it is with this preliminary task that the present volume is engaged. Until the remaining volumes are available any attempt to appraise the failure or success of the general purpose of the undertaking would, of course, be premature. But the writers have reached certain conclusions about Jesus which may be examined without prejudice to the general result. No quarrel is possible with the view that the Gospel story has been coloured by the theological tendencies of the period during which it took the form in which we now know it. It is the task of the historical critic to disentangle the original story as far as possible from these later accretions and colourings. This our editors do with great care and minuteness. But the result of their efforts is that they present a Jesus who is hardly more than a sort of above-the-average lay-preacher, who taught some sensible views about the observance of the Law, who objected to the Zealots (or whatever they were called at the time), and who at last died a violent death. As one reads one begins to wonder how it came to pass, if that was indeed the real size of Jesus, that he became the object of that idealization and worship which it is our editors' purpose to elucidate. One is led to suspect that there is some defect in the critical method which reaches such a result. Frankly, it appears as though the editors, in their painstaking preoccupation with minutiae, have lost their perception of the Gospel story as a whole; in other words, they can not see the wood for the trees.

As I write I find myself repeating Coventry Patmore's couplet,

In divinity and love
What's best worth saying can't be said;

and lamenting that after all the fine work that lies behind this volume, the editors seem to have missed that mysterious something which turns the Gospels into an organic whole and gives them a vitality which makes an abiding appeal to men. Certainly we are left without any explanation of the love and worship which Jesus has evoked all down the ages. There is surely something more to be said than that Jesus was the occasion of that fusion of Jewish religion with Greek ideas which grew into the Catholic tradition. It is questionable whether that tradition would have survived at all without its constant appeal to the Jesus of the Gospels. For religion is not primarily an affair of ideas. Before the ideas there is a fact of experience; and it is this fact of experience that appears to have escaped our editors. The continuity of the Christian tradition has not been primarily a continuity of thought but, however brokenly and thinly, the continuity and the transmission from one generation to another of a life and an experience.

Mr. Coates's little book, "The Christ of Revolution," while it obviously presupposes a critical view of the Gospels, gives us a representation of Jesus far more nearly commensurate with all the facts of the case. Though written in a popular style, it is plainly the work of a ripe and well-equipped scholar. One imagines that Mr. Coates is well aware of the critical position which Messrs. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake describe, and has taken it into account. Nevertheless he has given us a portrait of Jesus which is far more convincing—in view of all the historical facts—than the somewhat diminutive Jesus of "The Beginnings of Christianity." The title of Mr. Coates's book is perhaps a trifle lurid; but the author evidently means to bring into the foreground the essential revolutionary quality in the mind of Jesus. Jesus did not pro-

pose to improve the world but to regenerate it. His aim was not a better world but a different kind of world. Mr. Coates does us the real service of showing what the method of Jesus is; and that though his method may seem the longer way round, it is nevertheless not alone the swifter but the only sure way to the goal.

RICHARD ROBERTS.

A QUESTION OF ATTITUDE.

OUGHT one to write poetry about one's times or not? That is the question which a reading of Mr. de la Mare's "Collected Poems" arouses in us. The ordinary reviewer would probably simply say that Mr. de la Mare is a poet, and leave it at that. But we, who have upon our shoulders the heavy responsibility, not of reviewing poetry, but of writing critically about it, can not evade this question, upon the answer to which depends perhaps Mr. de la Mare's position one hundred years hence. There is no doubt that he is a poet; but ought a poet to write about his own times or not?

This question goes deeper, it will be seen, than the ordinary and too loosely-applied division of poets into classical and romantic. To take a few concrete instances, Shakespeare, as Messrs. Frank Harris and Bernard Shaw have pointed out, was pretty much of an Elizabethan. He treated the ideas of his own time with respect. He hated Puritanism, he extolled the flesh, he loathed democracy (I wonder how many people realize that "Coriolanus" is one of the greater plays of Shakespeare), he half believed in witches, ghosts, and all the paraphernalia of Elizabethan superstition. Shakespeare, in other words, was a writer of his time. Shelley, to take another example, was also a writer of his time; a time very much like the present, except for the fact that machinery had not as yet been perfected, nor had it begun to play a predominant part in human life. "Prometheus Unbound" is a great modern poem, telling of the clash of human will with destiny. Browning was also of his time; nine-tenths of his optimism is simply the reflection of the Victorian idea of progress. And, to come to the present day, Mr. Thomas Hardy, in "The Dynasts," betrays the influence of his own time, in the purely mechanical conception of the universe which he upholds.

On the other hand, Wordsworth began as a writer of his own time, and, when the French Revolution disappointed him, withdrew into the abstract contemplation of nature, and of the philosophical and ethical system he supposed to exist in nature. Keats avoided writing about his time, and withdrew into sheer sensuous beauty. Coleridge and Poe belonged to no specific period. Their best work is, in a sense, timeless and ageless.

Mr. de la Mare does not write about his time, either. He is so detached from his period, so remote from the ordinary considerations of time or space, that he does not seem to write about life at all. He is, I suppose, the one poet of eminence in England who has remained practically unaffected by the war. His kingdom is the kingdom of dreams, of unexpressed and inexpressible longings, of fairy-tales, of grown-up childhood. One-half of his poems are about childhood; a curious sort of childhood, for I doubt if any child would really ever enjoy these poems. Their fundamental emotion is childlike, but the mental processes displayed in them are highly sophisticated. Mr. de la Mare does not write thus by accident. He is cunningly deliberative and selective in his subjects, as in his choice of words. The careful reader of "The Listeners" and "Motley" may even detect in him a reasoned philosophy. Life, he practically tells us, is not worth much bothering about; the only thing that matters is whether the Kingdom of Dreams, the Beautiful Country, the Never-Never Land—by whatever name you call it, a state of immortal happiness—whether this exists or not. And he tells us that it does not, except in the brief glimpses of poetry. That is why poetry exists. For the rest,

¹"The Christ of Revolution." J. B. Coates. London: The Swarthmore Press.

¹"Collected Poems." Walter de la Mare. New York: Henry Holt and Co.

Somewhere there nothing is, and there poor man
Must get what changeless vague of peace he can.

Enough has been said to show Mr. de la Mare's attitude towards poetry and towards life. The question now arises whether this attitude is not somewhat too severely limited to make of him anything more than a delicate craftsman, a painter of miniatures, a carver of cherry-stones. Here is a man who seems almost to think that life is a bubble and art only a prettier bubble which we blow to cheat life of half its ugliness. Is this so? Have the poets whose work stands unforgettable told us this? I think not. The great poets have always succeeded in making their acceptance of art imply an equal acceptance of the grim business of living. Mr. de la Mare accepts life, only, we fear, up to the end of childhood. Therefore, to our great regret be it said, he remains a perfect example of the minor poet.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

SHORTER NOTICES.

"ADAM OF DUBLIN"¹ is evidently the first novel of another trilogy. Thus far, Adam is a small boy of Dublin, who, born in the shabbiest of surroundings and of parents the most disreputable, is befriended by a kindly priest and given a start upwards. The author has drawn the picture of a youngster, lovable, impressionable and acquisitive. Decidedly, there is hope for his future; but the portrait does not glow with sufficient vitality or meet the eye with sufficient precision for the reader to cry, "more, more." The story so far is noteworthy not so much because of its youthful hero, as for the effortless creation of the atmosphere of Irish life. L. M. R.

TAKE a handful of assorted short stories by the average American writer, which have appeared in magazines, and garner them in book form, and they seem to have undergone an unaccountable diminution. Is it because they have depended so much on the blatant illustrations that have originally set them off, or upon the mysterious virtue of the advertisements that have flanked them? Without doubt, the more sedate format shows up their frailties in a manner which the flashier magazine tends to obscure. It is greatly to the credit of Mr. H. G. Dwight's stories that they seem enhanced rather than diminished by this test. In "The Emperor of Elam"² tales of most diversified scene and treatment have been brought together, and they stand forth as genuine creations. The colours of the East have been brushed with impressionistic strokes into many of the stories, while others—nearer home in *local*—still retain the illusive flavour of an artistry which keeps them beyond the pale of the commonplace or the provincial. Mr. Dwight brings to the writing of these tales the triple qualifications of satirist, keen observer and stylist.

L. B.

In his posthumous novel³ Mr. Howells appears at the outermost limb of his realistic philosophy. Professor Kelwyn, to be sure, prosily pedagogical to the life, and again flashing, also to the life, a shaft of dry Yankee wit, is excellently drawn. His wife is quite as good. She is that same professor's wife one meets so frequently—proud of her position and vaguely anxious to "realize" on it, but always balked of anything Napoleonic by the possession of a conscience; she would like to be ruthless, but she desires too much to be fair; she would revel in snobbery, but can not brave the fear of being accused of it. Naturally she never has an easy moment, though the existence of her kind was apparently easier in the middle 'seventies than it is in 1920. Still, for all this, it must be admitted that "The Vacation of the Kelwyns" represents Mr. Howells in his most uninteresting phase. It shows again how colourless he considered the material for fiction might be and yet still justify infinite pains and the consecration of a great talent to its shaping. F. E. H.

THERE is no disputing the fact that the central route of exploration toward the West—the route by which the greatest tide of migration flowed across the Rockies to the Pacific—is the one which has been accorded least consideration in textbooks and in the study of American history. Students are made well acquainted with the exploits of the pioneers in the Great Northwest and the Great Southwest, but these are

but the upper and lower crusts of a great sandwich. The meat is the central route, extending westward from the Missouri River, and it is this avenue of expansion which Mr. John G. Neihardt has treated in "The Splendid Wayfaring."⁴ This task has evidently been a labour of love, for Mr. Neihardt has not felt impelled to follow the pattern of angular, unimaginative recital into which so many books of this kind fall. The pages reflect an absorption in the theme, and a wish to make it vital to a generation which has come to look upon those stirring times as being quite as remote as the Trojan wars. L. B.

LIKE one of the elaborately concocted drinks mentioned in its pages, "San Cristobal de la Habana"⁵ is a skilful blend of Havana and Mr. Hergesheimer. Half the time we see the city through his meticulously observant eyes, and the other half he plays Boswell to his own personality and ideas. The result is an engaging series of vignettes, a most understanding interpretation, and a remarkably honest human document. The author christens Havana a mid-Victorian Pompeii: at night she seems "a vision in blanché satin with fire-flies in her hair." Incarnate Cuba glows for him in the fanlight of tinted glass above his door. He finds a shawl whose flaunting magenta inspires him with the plot for a novel. In two pages he gives an impressionistic sketch of the island's history which should be the despair of wordy chroniclers. Through his eyes we see the menace of Africa in the barbaric unrestraint of the *dansón* and the sombre cult of the *ñañiquismo*. We have a proxy-glimpse of pelota, that Brobdignagian "squash," of the races at Oriental Park, and of that essentially Cuban sport, cock-fighting. Interspersed with it all, sometimes rather unduly emphasized, are the hopes and fears and somewhat Chestertonian opinions of the author, of "Java Head," who sees Havana in his final vision as "a city created on a level bright tide, under lustrous green hills, for the reward of cherished and unworldly dreams." J. S. N.

FUTURE generations will not lack for the comment of contemporaries upon the writers of this age. Volumes of interpretative essays multiply almost as fast as the imaginative literature which they discuss. Some are gossipy, some offer solemn judgments, and some predict. Few are as direct in their purposes as Mr. Douglas Goldring's "Reputations,"⁶ and few establish their conclusions with such freshness and ease. Possibly Mr. Goldring is a little too fluent; his judgments roll off somewhat like first thoughts, and he is a little amusing in his consciousness of maturity. But he has an unmistakable knack of hitting precisely the strength and weakness of those whom he discusses. His conclusions, easy as they seem to be, have body and weight; and even if he is somewhat conscious of being an iconoclast, he at least succeeds in being one when needful. Certain fairly well-preserved clay idols are cracked under his hand. He takes the three popular Georgian novelists, Mackenzie, Walpole, Cannan, and pretty well shows the stuff of which they are made, the emptiness and priggishness of Mackenzie in his earlier novels, his achievements of a cinema-like dazzle in the later ones, Walpole's conventionalism, the unfulfilled promise of Gilbert Cannan. In H. G. Wells he amply recognizes a clairvoyant power to touch and seize upon and bind together the strands of the best opinion, often before these have wholly manifested themselves; but he shows trenchantly, though generously, the failure of Mr. Wells to perform this important office during the war because he was swept into the general storm of emotionalism. Somewhat flippantly he calls Arnold Bennett the "Gordon Selfridge of English Letters," but the implication of an efficient commercialism is quite sufficiently proved, and the subtle thing is that even Mr. Bennett's finer works, the Clayhanger series and "The Old Wives' Tale," are related to the lesser ones as the products chiefly, perhaps, of an immense industry. But Mr. Goldring is not occupied merely with levelling down. He writes a carefully appreciative, balanced study of James Elroy Flecker; and his essay on D. H. Lawrence richly recognizes Lawrence's genius. Mr. Goldring's book has variety; and scattered through it are vivacious occasional judgments about people and things, about tendencies in English writing, about politics, the State and the artist. Even as a collection of essays it is not all of a kind. Along with the critical studies there are a few reminiscent essays of charm. C. M. R.

¹ "Adam of Dublin." Conal O'Riordan. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe.

² "The Emperor of Elam and Other Stories." H. G. Dwight. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company.

³ "The Vacation of the Kelwyns." William Dean Howells. New York: Harper & Brothers.

⁴ "The Splendid Wayfaring." John G. Neihardt. New York: The Macmillan Company.

⁵ "San Cristobal de la Habana." Joseph Hergesheimer. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

⁶ "Reputations." Douglas Goldring. New York: Thomas Seltzer.

A REVIEWER'S NOTE-BOOK.

THIS country has at last come in for its effective share of self-criticism; its own children are saying the most drastic and discomfiting things about it: but this has happened overnight; the critic in America is so new a type that it is perhaps natural he should be put down as an undesirable alien, as a traitor. Is there anything else in modern history like the unanimity of the praise and confidence with which, by its citizens, the American ship of State has been launched and manned? In all our past there has been scarcely a breath of dissent, doubt or censure: the outlaw Whitman's "Democratic Vistas" is almost unique in that regard. We have had no Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold or Morris to chide us, no Nietzsche to tell us what we lack, no Taine or Renan to challenge our mediocrity and our frivolity: Emerson's and Lowell's few strictures are lost in the flood of their social optimism. How inevitably we have become the most complacent of peoples!—in whose eyes, indeed, the gaol and the asylum are the only logical abodes for the dissenter.

I AM reminded of all this by a collection of essays and addresses called "Ruskin the Prophet and other Centenary Studies" (E. P. Dutton & Company: Messrs. Masefield, Masterman, Hobson, Nevinson, and Binyon are among the contributors). Ruskin has always seemed a quite normal and familiar possession of ours; yet as I glance through these eloquent or intimate pages dedicated to his memory, the thought comes to my mind: How incredibly different this man was from anything that America could have produced! Hear Mr. Masefield: "Ruskin, looking out upon his native land some eighty years ago, decided that he could not believe in it, that there was nothing spiritual there which he could trust, nor human work being done which he could share." Imagine a nineteenth-century American giving utterance to such a sentiment, the sentiment from which all Ruskin's work sprang! That was indeed the animating sentiment of perhaps the greatest English literature of the century: who but Macaulay in England was not filled, as regards the future of his people, with more or less fundamental doubts? The writers of America, on the other hand, chanted a unanimous hymn to progress. They were happy, they were hopeful. Was it because the American life of that day was finer and wholesomer than English life, because it contained a greater spiritual promise? Few in our generation would say so. We know how fully justified were most of the travellers' reflections on our old social life—which used to cause such bitterness in American breasts: they were not malignant, those travellers, any more than the innumerable European critics and scholars were malignant who looked upon Americanism as a poisonous growth that might well infect and ultimately destroy civilization. As now we observe the complacency which that national optimism has given birth to, we ask ourselves whether it was really a symptom of health at all, whether it was not rather the sign of a fatalistic abdication of the will in the presence of material opportunity.

OF course the great difference between our social history and that of any European country is that we have never at any time conceived it possible to shape our life. It has been growing and changing so rapidly, so many fresh racial strains have been perpetually merging themselves in it, so many new territories have been opening before it, it has been in such a state of flux that the idea of moulding it has scarcely entered our calculations. It is this that has prevented the development of criticism in America. We know how diffident Hawthorne was regarding every prospect of social reform; we know his fear, embodied in the character of Hollingsworth, of tampering, as he said, with the "natural order of things." It was the same diffidence that inhibited Mark Twain, that led Henry Adams to publish his "Democracy" anonymously and prevented him from coming forward as the critic of American life he evidently wished

to be. Let the American process go on, we imagine them saying, these men, some in faith, some in despair—but more and more in despair! There is no shaping it, there is no controlling it, anyway. But is it not the case, or the probability, that the more this American process unfolds itself, the more the American people will be reduced to desiring nothing but what the advertisements put before them? "It is an *idea*," says John Eglinton, "for which we wait. Without an idea man is frivolous, anarchic, dissatisfied, despicable. With an idea, the long-boarded initiatives of his nature are liberated, he strains forward to new consummations, . . . and the human faculties, which scatter like hounds when the trail is false, are recalled as by the horn of the huntsman." How can anything which is so true of the individual, which has been so true of peoples in the past, fail to be true of us also? The sudden rise of criticism in this country, which coincides with the closing of the frontier and the damming up, in a measure, of our social energies, seems to portend a possibility of this kind. Criticism, so silent a generation ago, is vocal now; but why should it be vocal if there is not within it a sudden faith in the ability of Americans to shape their destiny, after all, to mould it and give it form, to ride matter as matter has ridden men? Is the idea emerging at last, the will to make a spiritual entity of a hundred million blind and restless men?

WE have fed on hope where we should have fed on desire. Who has desired anything for America? Not those who usurp the title of patriots. They rest in their petty inherited prejudices and close their minds to every suggestion of an America radically different from the America they have known. If they had ever desired a great and beautiful corporate life, they would have willingly submitted to a candid scrutiny their prepossessions in regard to property and morals, they would have eagerly opened their imaginations to the rich gifts of temperament and tradition a dozen races have brought to these shores instead of despoiling them to make a Puritan's holiday. How scattered our forces have been! We have taken pleasure, it seems, in making machines of men; and repudiating the vision of a society, we have encouraged such men as Thoreau and John Muir to give up the corporate life as a sort of bad job and to devote to trees and animals the passion they might have devoted to human beings. In such ways as this our thought has been centrifugal instead of centripetal: it has gone out to the frame, it has never fixed itself upon the picture. And the picture, in consequence, has never emerged.

So I suggest, now that criticism has at last found its voice in this country, that we should do well to pick up again the lost threads of those great social critics of the nineteenth century. We shall be able to detect their absurdities quickly enough: what they can give us is a sense of society as a whole and of man as a social animal, capable of moulding his environment towards a humane ideal. Mr. Binyon truly says of Ruskin that he might have taken as his life's motto Blake's lines—

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

American criticism, too, is capable of such a vision as that.

THE Reviewer recommends the following recent books to the notice of readers of the *Freeman*:

"Creative Revolution," by Eden and Cedar Paul. New York: Thomas Seltzer.

"Mazzini's Letters to an English Family," edited by E. F. Richards. New York: John Lane Co.

"The Sacred Wood," by T. S. Eliot. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

"Parliament and Revolution," by J. Ramsay Macdonald. New York: Thomas Seltzer.

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3500 crowns.

(It will cost you only seven dollars.)

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4000 marks.

(It will cost you only seven dollars.)

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200 lire.

(It will cost you only seven dollars.)

IN other words, the prices of American books and periodicals—as, indeed, of all merchandise—are prohibitive to European purchasers. Yet never was it so important that the constructive minds of Europe and America meet as at present. We can well afford to buy *their* papers, but if they are to read ours, *you* must pay for them.

Who will pay \$7.00 to send the FREEMAN to the library of a University in Europe? Some universities are getting it now: others should have it. Will the ardent Freemanites help?

WE sometimes wonder whether we do not inadvertently create the impression that *all* readers of the FREEMAN are perfectly satisfied with *every* issue of the paper. We are but human in giving preference to laudatory comments, though we have shown our willingness to reveal unpleasant criticism on this page. As a matter of fact, the praise that comes to us usually discloses sober reflection while the adverse estimates are often fraught with impatience. Consequently we succumb quite naturally to kind words: the line of least resistance is often that of the greatest intelligence.

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So we look forward to the brickbats and bouquets; both are signs of life. Our readers like us, or they don't like us, but few are indifferent to us. We doubt if any of them pick up the FREEMAN and languidly drop it on the pile for tomorrow.

We want many more readers of positive opinions: we want the men and women you argue with, those with whom you discuss serious things seriously and those who refuse to take anything seriously. Both classes can sharpen their teeth on the FREEMAN.

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